



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians
Legislative Branch of Tribal Government

Weekly Review: March 20-24, 2023

Band Assembly Meeting

March 21, 2023

The Speaker of the Assembly convened a meeting of the Band Assembly. The District Representatives approved the agenda.

The Speaker of the Assembly convened the compromise hearing for Vetoed Act 11-23 at 9:05 a.m. The hearing commenced with an opening statement from Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin and an opening statement from the sponsor of the bill District I Representative Virgil Wind. The opening statements were followed by comments from District II Representative Wendy Merrill and District III Representative Harry Davis. Representative Merrill requested Chief Benjamin to summarize her letter that band members are unable to view. Chief Benjamin gave a summary of her veto letter. Following the comments there was further discussion and comments from the Chief and Representatives. The hearing was closed at 9:36 a.m.

Workshop

March 23, 2023

Legal staff facilitated a workshop for the elected officials and staff regarding proposed revisions to Chapter 13 (Child Protection) of Title 8 (Children and Families).

Workshop

March 24, 2023

Legal staff facilitated a workshop for the elected officials, legislative staff, Commissioner of Administration, Human Resources Director, and Deputy Solicitor General regarding proposed revisions to HR personnel policies and procedures.

Legislative Branch Weekly Sync Meeting

March 24, 2023

Legislative staff facilitated a Weekly Sync Meeting with elected officials to review the upcoming Band Assembly agenda item compromise hearings.

Band Assembly Meeting

March 24, 2023

The Speaker of the Assembly Pro Tem convened a meeting of the Band Assembly. The District Representatives approved the agenda.

The Speaker of the Assembly Pro Tem convened the compromise hearing for Vetoed Act 14-23 at 3:41 p.m. The hearing commenced with an opening statement from Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin and an opening statement from the sponsor of the bill District I Representative Virgil Wind. The opening statements were followed by comments from District II Representative Wendy Merrill and District III Representative Harry Davis. Following the comments there was

further discussion on scheduling a workshop to continue compromise. The hearing was closed at 3:51 p.m.

The Speaker of the Assembly Pro Tem convened the compromise hearing for Vetoed Act 15-23 at 3:53 p.m. The hearing commenced with an opening statement from Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin and an opening statement from the sponsor of the bill District I Representative Virgil Wind. The opening statements were followed by comments from District II Representative Wendy Merrill and District III Representative Harry Davis. Following the comments there was further comments from Chief Benjamin and Syngen Kanassatega, Chairperson of the Board of Directors for Band Member Legal Services. There was further discussion and comments with the Chairperson and the District Representatives. Prior to closing the hearing there was discussion on scheduling a workshop to continue compromise. The hearing was closed at 4:26 p.m.

In the “Message from the Chief Executive” portion of the agenda, Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin opened with Chi-Miigwech to all that attended the Treaty Rights celebration, she was unable to attend she was in Rochester, MN at the Mayo clinic for family obligations, but she heard it was an excellent turn out and lots of fun going on over there and glad you enjoyed yourselves band members and others who attended, and she wanted to say have a great weekend the weather is warming up hopefully, there is very little snow in Rochester but as you go north of course the snow gets deeper and deeper. Chief Benjamin stated Chi-Miigwech to Beth Gruber from Mille Lacs Band Corporate Ventures and our own Brittany Wind, Grants Director for working on this broadband grant that just a couple of tribes were awarded which of course one is Mille Lacs Band and the grant is for 11.4 million dollars to extend broadband capability and internet services throughout our reservation and that will truly assist with education, telehealth and thinking about it, it allows our users to have access to the web and all kinds of information that they can secure from that. Chief Benjamin closed her comments with just want to state that yes the Executive Branch has a lot of positive outcomes of the work that they do and on behalf of all band members and again thank you to those individuals that work so hard we have lots and lots of examples of the good work that the Executive Branch has provided on behalf of band members and the commitment of people wanting to make sure that we have good services and she thinks even this discussion about legal services making sure that there is adequate services for band members in the legal realm when they need it. Miigwech.

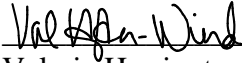
In the “Messages from the Representatives” portion of the agenda, District I Representative Virgil Wind opened with thanking Syngen for coming and helping us work through that and providing some commentary on Band Member Legal Services concerns, they really were taken into consideration when drafting this and we will do that moving forward. Representative Wind stated to echo Madam Chief he was able to sneak over for the Treaty Rights celebration there was a wonderful lunch, great number of band members there, it was nice to see everybody smiling and happy celebrating our treaty rights, so thank you to Madam Chief and all other leadership that have proceeded us for fighting for those rights one hundred percent thank you guys. Representative Wind stated a reminder for the District I community that our community meeting will be on March 29, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at the new District I community center we’ll have District I updates and welcome we will also have Commissioner of DNR Kelly Applegate there he’ll speak about the Water Over Nickel and Tamarack mine opposition that’s going on, he will also give a 2023 Mille Lacs fisheries update, so really inviting everybody to be there. Representative Wind closed his comments with thanking Madam Chief and the Executive Branch for always doing their hard work and for bringing some suggestions on how we can make this legislation better, he always says it’s not about the lens that he looks through but the lens of

everybody that contributes to this, this legislation is in fact a product of collaboration amongst leadership and band members concerns, unfortunately some short falls that affect the lives of band members at times, so really do appreciate the band members, Madam Chief again everybody that contributes to drafting this new legislation to try to meet today's needs and those every changing needs of the band members.

District II Representative Wendy Merrill opened with our family fun night is scheduled for April 16, 2023 3-5 p.m. Representative Merrill stated she does have a sign up for fantasy bingo, they have to let us know by April 14, 2023. Representative Merrill stated open gym April 2, 2023. Representative Merrill stated Chiminsing Ziigwan Pow Wow set for April 23, 2023. Representative Merrill closed her comments by stating just some updates we have within the community so she doesn't have a lot of other statements.

District III Representative Harry Davis opened with he would just like to mention his son Aaron was honored to meet with a gentleman over in DI called Virgil Wind at the Treaty Rights celebration and he was honored and he wanted to thank Melanie Benjamin and Syngen Kanassatega for their help with these bills today. Representation Davis also thanked Darcie Big Bear for all her help.

The next Band Assembly meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at 10:00 AM.



Valerie Harrington-Wind
Chief Communications Officer