



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians  
*Legislative Branch of Tribal Government*

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## Weekly Review: August 14-18, 2023

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### **Band Assembly Meeting**

**August 14, 2023**

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

Band Assembly conducted a compromise hearing regarding Vetoed Act 50-23. The hearing commenced at 9:24 a.m. with an opening statement from Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin. Following the opening statement there were statements from the District Representatives. The compromise hearing was closed at 9:48 a.m.

Band Assembly conducted a compromise hearing regarding Vetoed Act 51-23. The hearing commenced at 9:48 a.m. with an opening statement from Chief Executive Melanie Benjamin. Following the opening statement there were statements from the District Representatives. The compromise hearing was closed at 9:58 a.m.

During other business Keira Nickaboine, Band Member gave a statement regarding Minors' Trust hardship.

In the "Messages from the Representatives" portion of the agenda, District I Representative Virgil Wind opened with sometimes amendments to statues aren't going to be perfect and the policy one there's a process that could restart after this, if there is a need for maternity leave, a social media policy, and a remote work policy added to it, that process can start at any point, holding this particular bill hostage there are some very important additions to this bill that need to be applied as soon as possible, so it isn't the Band Assembly that is holding up that process, unfortunately there are going to be band employees that suffer due to this, so hopefully we can reach a compromise. Representative Wind shared in regards to Minors' Trust it's been hard holding off these minors' trusts as we try to fix it and codify it correctly within statute as he said earlier there has been some disagreements amongst the assembly members and our attorneys at times when applying interpretations of law and we want to be consistent and follow that law as much as we can and always make sure we're not playing around in those areas and that is why there's a stack of 17 of these next to me, we want to make sure we're doing it adequately, he does believe that some of them have been done loosely in the past, he hasn't done it. He made a statement as well about the political gain that he may have, he doesn't get political gain from seeing band members suffer, from hearing hardships of our band members when they come in, as in Nickaboine's statement "I'm one of four siblings and I need a way to provide adequate transportation to my family" he shared other scenarios of minors' trust hardships needs (pregnant mother 20 years old need stuff for my baby so that she's prepared, a lot of vehicle stuff kids turning 16) a lot of our band members don't have a savings account that's accessible, what's happened over time they have been able to use their hardship withdrawals. Representative Wind closed his comments with like he stated before one of his hard lines was education, be moving

towards your education, if you are not then we're not considering it, there have been times that kids have went back to school, they have showed attendance, they showed their grades increasing so it can also be used as a tool to help steer our kids in the right direction as well.

District II Representative Wendy Merrill opened with how important it is that this hardship process in this bill gets approved, we do have quite a few individual band members that are waiting for their own money, as District I Representative stated there are kids out there that are doing good, kids out there that are taking PSE classes and they need a ride to Brainerd or Fondulac. Representative Merrill shared a personal example of her taking in five kids that weren't her own and the need to provide vehicles for every one of those kids was nearly impossible even for somebody that could potentially have the resources it's just not there and there are kids out there that deserve it and need it and can use it for educational purposes and tuition isn't cheap anymore you have kids that go to school outside of Minnesota and they take out loans for that, when they can use their hardships, we're not providing those resources to band members like we should. Representative Merrill closed her comments with there's processes in place and she's glad we're having this year long conversation; we've been working on this for over a year. Miigwech.

**Workshop**

**August 15, 2023**

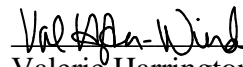
Legal staff facilitated a workshop for the elected officials and staff regarding the draft letter to the Chief Executive regarding compromise hearing for Act 50-23, 51-23.

**Workshop**

**August 17, 2023**

Legal staff facilitated a workshop for the elected officials and staff regarding the draft letter to the Chief Executive regarding compromise hearing for Act 50-23, 51-23.

*The next Band Assembly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.*

  
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Valerie Harrington-Wind  
Chief Communications Officer