**TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
**REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the Tribal Executive Committee was called to order by President Michael LaRoque at 8:56 a.m., on January 28, 2025, at Black Bear Resort Casino, Carlton, Minnesota.

Invocation: Ricky Defoe

President LaRoque informed the Committee that Bois Forte Chairwoman Cathy Chavers and Fond du Lac Secretary-Treasurer Robert Abramowski are both retiring and acknowledged their service.

Roll Call: Faron Jackson, Chairman, Leech Lake: Leonard Fineday, Secretary-Treasurer, Leech Lake; Bruce Savage, Chairman, Fond du Lac; Robert Abramowski, Secretary-Treasurer, Fond du Lac; Michael Fairbanks, Chairman, White Earth; Michael LaRoque, Secretary-Treasurer, White Earth; Robert Deschampe, Chairman, Grand Portage; April McCormick, Secretary-Treasurer, Grand Portage; Cathy Chavers, Chairwoman, Bois Forte; Virgil Wind, Chief Executive, Mille Lacs.

Zoom: Tara Geshick, Secretary-Treasurer, Bois Forte; Sheldon Boyd, Secretary-Treasurer, Mille Lacs.

Others Present: Luke Warnsholz, Executive Director, MCT; Phil Brodeen, Legal, MCT; Agatha Armstrong, Rep., Grand Portage; Marie Spry; Rep., Grand Portage; Carolyn Beaulieu, Rep., Mille Lacs; Leon Staples Jr., Rep., Leech Lake; Chris Haugene, Steve White, Rep., Leech Lake; Shane Drift, Rep., Bois Forte; Laura Lee Erickson, Rep., White Earth; Caleb Dogeagle, Mille Lacs; Bobby Norby, Enrollment Coordinator, Leech Lake; Sally Fineday, Delegate, Leech Lake; Shannon Heisler, Enrollment Coordinator, White Earth; Joe Norby; Dawn Jackson, Enrollment Director; Leech Lake; Sheena Matrious, Director, Gov. Affairs, Mille Lacs; Heidi Gordon, Superintendent, BIA-MN Agency; Sara Anderson; Ben Dinucci, Mesabi Metallics; Teedo Sullivan; MCT staff and other interested parties.

**AGENDA:**

Motion by Chairwoman Chavers to approve the agenda with additions. Seconded by Chairman Savage.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

President LaRoque addressed meeting decorum and asked that all be respectful of the long agenda and of one another.

**MINUTES**:

Motion by Secretary-Treasurer Fineday to approve the October 23, 2024, Regular meeting minutes. Seconded by Chief Executive Virgil Wind.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

Motion by Secretary-Treasurer Abramowski to approve the Special meeting minutes of December 12, 2024, Special meeting. Seconded by Secretary-Treasurer Fineday.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

Motion by Secretary-Treasurer Fineday to approve by consent enrollment resolutions 24-25 through 43-25. Seconded by Chairman Savage.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

Motion by Chairman Jackson to approve Resolution 44-25 re: authorizing Michael LaRoque as signatory on MCT accounts at Western Bank. Seconded by Secretary-Treasurer Fineday.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

Phil Brodeen informed the committee that he would be sending a cover letter to the governor explaining the following three resolutions.

Motion by Chairwoman Chavers to approve Resolution 45-25 (GTAC) regarding the Minnesota Gas Technical Advisory Committee's (GTAC)'lack of consultation with the tribes and failure to incorporate tribal recommendations submitted to GTAC via written comment. Seconded by Chairman Deschampe.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

Motion by Chairman Fairbanks to approve Resolution 46-25 re: The Minnesota DNR decision to cancel attendance by DNR staff at all future Tribal State Relations Trainings without any communication or consultation with the tribes, and request that Minnesota DNR staff be prohibited from entering into personal consulting contracts with companies that have or will have permit applications before the agency. Seconded by Chairman Deschampe.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

Motion by Chief Executive Wind to approve Resolution 47-25 re: requesting that that Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) serve as the Responsible Governing Unit (RGU) for gas permitting. Seconded by Chairwoman Chavers.
11 For, 0 Against, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.

**QUARTERLY REPORTS:**

ADMINISTRATION: Joel Smith
Joel Smith presented Administration's report that focused on Enrollment and Title Reconciliation. President LaRoque stated he acknowledged receipt of report

EDUATION: Billy Annette
Billie Annette presented the Education report, which focused on 21 Minnesota school districts that are eligible but have not applied for State aid, impacting approximately 800 students, and other matters. President LaRoque acknowledged receipt of Education quarterly report.

HUMAN SERVICES: Evie Campbell
Evie Campbell summarized her report, and noted ongoing process of hiring positions regarding TANF, future trainings, and senior community services. President LaRoque acknowledged receipt of Human Services quarterly report.

**BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS**: Heidi Gordon, Superintendent, MN Agency
Heidi Gordon presented and summarized her written report, focusing on issues regarding fee-to-trust applications and probate issues. In response to questions regarding federal funding freeze, Gordon said she would keep the TEC regularly informed of any updates. President LaRoque acknowledged receipt of the BIA quarterly report.

**MCT CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM DELGATES**:
A summary of constitutional reform activities was provided by delegates from the following Bands:

Leech Lake: Sally Fineday
Grand Portage: Michele Hakala-Beeksma
Mille Lacs: Danielle Smith
Fond du Lac: Tara/Cheryl Edwards
Bois Forte: Chairwoman Chavers noted that the BF delegate had to step down

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**: Dr. Mary Hermez
Dr. Hermez presented about recent developments in the U of M Ojibwe Language program.

**MINING**: Ben Dinucci, Mesabi Metallics, presented about Mesabi's goal of becoming a zero emissions discharge facility and answered questions from the audience.

**NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CLINIC**: Sarah Andersen, Director of Development, White Earth Nation. Sarah Anderson presented about progress on the Native American Community Clinic, which will be the first clinic to also have housing. Plans are to offer other services like spiritual care, employment training, life skills development, etc. The NACC appreciates tribal support for the project.

**MINNEAPOLIS URBAN OFFICE DISCUSSION**: President Mike LaRoque. President LaRoque presented concerns about deteriorating condition of the MCT urban office building and the need to assess and plan for what is needed. Chairwoman Chavers recommended that each Band send a representative to meet at the building to assess. TEC discussed temporary arrangements using other tribal buildings during any future renovation or if the building becomes unusable.

**LEGAL:**

Phil Brodeen, Brodeen & Paulson. Phil Brodeen presented a resolution that would amend the Enrollment Ordinance to allow a Band to define Minnesota Chippewa Indian blood as being from any Chippewa tribe in Minnesota, provided that the band governing body has enacted a resolution that authorized the use of such blood for enrollment purposes. TEC members discussed and shared their views about the resolution and their concerns or support for the resolution.

Motion by Secretary-Treasurer Fineday to adopt Resolution 48-25 regarding Enrollment Ordinance Change, seconded by Chairman Jackson.

Roll call Vote:

**For**: Faron Jackson, Leonard Fineday, Michael Fairbanks, Cathy Chavers, April McCormick, Robert Deschampe, Tara Geshick, Bruce Savage, Michael Abramowski, Michael LaRoque

**Against**: Virgil Wind, Sheldon Boyd

9 For, 2 Against, 0 Silent.  Motion Carried.

**Note**: President Michael LaRoque initially cast a vote, but directed that his vote be rescinded.

**Note**: Sheldon Boyd asked that his reason for voting against the resolution be recorded: He supports Leech Lake's sovereignty, but on principle, opposes the process of individual tribes needing to go to an organization (the MCT) as part of the approval process for enrollment, because he views the MCT as a created organization and not a tribe.

**NEW BUSINESS**:

TEC members briefly discussed Executive Orders just issued by the President freezing federal funding. Phil Brodeen recommended that each Band carefully document every instance where these changes may affect each Band.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Chairwoman Chavers to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 p.m., seconded by Chairman Savage.
11 For, 0 Opposed, 0 Silent. Motion Carried.