



## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC.**

**November 14, 2023**

**Call to order:** Our National Executive Board Meeting was called to order by National President Rebecca Stafford at 07:31 P.M. CST.

**Opening:**

PNP Carla Brodacki opened with prayer. PNP/VAVS REP Anne Parker led us in The Pledge of Allegiance. 1st Vice President Karen Stillwell led our Preamble. Recording Secretary Amy Hutchinson conducted roll call.

**The following were present:**

- National President-Rebecca Stafford
- 1VP-Karen Stillwell
- 2VP-Karla Keller
- 3VP-Jacqueline Ransom
- 4VP-Brenda Ternullo
- Recording Secretary-Amy Jo Hutchinson
- Financial Secretary-Sonya Kay
- Treasurer-Alethea Tennill
- PNP/Chaplain-Stacy Anders (Joined at 7:55 CST)
- PNP-Carla Brodacki
- PNP/VAVS REP-Anne Parker
- Dept. MI President-Trudy Wysocki
- Dept. Ohio President-Dianna Lynn Feldman
- Dept. MN President-Jen Pecarina
- Parliamentarian-Patti Elliott
- Finance Chair-Julie Straw

## **Finance Committee Report – Julie Straw - Finance Chair**

1. FC meeting will be held on Sunday, November 12, 2023, to discuss financial matters. Financial reports have been sent to the board for review, opened the floor for discussion. No question or concerns were voiced.

**MOTION** to approve Nov. financials as presented and set aside pending audit. No second needed coming from committee.

**CALL** for a vote.

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

### **2. Convention update:**

A. 2023 and expenses - all issues resolved.

B. 2024 - tentative location selected, contract being reviewed by NP (reminder that NT is part of the 2024 Convention Committee and will bring any financial issues to our attention.)

### **3. Maguire/Maguire, Inc. vs CFC**

Committee member and CFC Chair Christine McCracken will pursue communications with M/M and report their recommendations on potential states/campaigns.

### **4. 2023 Compliance:**

A. NFS reported info from 4VP: 15 chapters totally done, sixty-four chapters have submitted nothing, and 116 chapters are somewhere in between all and nothing. Fifty-eight chapters have at least turned in their annual report.

B. FC is suggesting that we resort to old-fashioned texts and calls or at least send out an email blast with some sort of read receipt.

C. FC did discuss the necessity to emphasize the Jan 15 “drop dead date” so that chapters understand they are risking suspension.

**5. IRS/EIN filing difficulties:** - TN5 has been reinstated. (No other troubles noted.)

## **6. NT and NFS Reports:**

A. NFS is still consulting our governing documents concerning time period for closed chapter funds.

B. NT is still communicating with Missouri Dept of Revenue regarding exemption from sales tax for the online store sales.

C. Online Store:

1) Logo vests - still looking for an affordable alternative.

2) Hangers, coins & red jackets have been restocked

3) Brochures - available on the website. NT is researching costs for a local/nationwide printer option with cost comparison to current printer.

D. NT will be out of town in March 2024 - FC is requesting permission to keep the store open on the website for orders to be placed, but to suspend shipping during her absence.

Notice would be placed clearly on the website.

**MOTION** is coming from committee to suspend shipping of online store orders from March 5 through March 23, 2024.

No second needed coming from committee.

**Discussion:** NP opened the floor for questions or concerns regarding this motion. 1VP questioned where the notice would be, at time of purchase or on the website in general. FC clarified that as soon as the motion is approved it will state on the website that the order will not ship for two weeks in March 2024, if items are needed sooner take that into consideration when ordering. NP added that the notice would be placed now to give people several months' notice of the shipping delay. 4VP suggested that our webmaster also add a reminder to order receipts that the shipping will not occur for 2 weeks. NP also suggested this be placed in the newsletter as well.

**CALL** for a vote.

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

E. Christmas/Holiday Bundle -

**Motion** coming from committee to approve a Stocking Stuffer bundle of Nail file, Logo pen, Luggage tag and Proud of our Sons & Daughters patch for \$10.

No second needed coming from committee.

**CALL** for a vote.

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

FC noted that they are looking for ideas for future bundles IE: Valentines Day, St. Patrick's Day, Mother's Day.

7. Chapter Grant Applications -

**MOTION** coming from committee to approve the applications from existing chapters OH9, NY6, MA1, and TX6 grants.

No second needed coming from committee.

**CALL** for a vote.

**No opposed, one abstention.**

**MOTION PASSED**

PNP/VAVS Rep asked through the NP if the Dept of Michigan President could inquire on their new chapters status of applying for a grant as they were instructed to do so. Dept of Michigan President will follow up in this.

- A. Reminder that all chapters approved for grants must have completed compliance successfully. FC is discussing adding language to 2024-2025 financial policies that chapter grant receipt may be tied to completing compliance "on time."

NT regarding ornaments they will be shipped this week.

2VP questioned what message for Compliance is needed for next newsletter.

4VP will have a new one for her to add to the newsletter.

Next FC monthly meeting of this fiscal year will be on Sunday, December 10, 2023.

**Officer Reports in addition individually submitted reports to the NEB.**

1<sup>st</sup> VP Karen Stillwell: Nothing additional to report.

2<sup>nd</sup> VP Karla Keller: Nothing additional to report.

3<sup>rd</sup> VP Jacqueline Ransom: Nothing additional to report. She wanted to mention that in researching Veteran deaths she noted on the Patriot Guard Riders website, and she found there is an average of 8 – 10 Veteran deaths daily that they attend. She noted that listing these names will make our convention list long, but that she feels the need to include them on our list. PNP advised that the names should be included.

4<sup>th</sup> VP Brenda Ternullo: She noted that she has four more chapters that have completed Compliance since her last report. There are many chapters that have not even started Compliance. NP suggested checking your spam files for emails. And making phone calls to chapters. PNP/ Chaplain questioned that there may be some conflicting emails from the website stating they have submitted but then they get an email from 4VP stating they are missing information, just trying to get clarification from 4VP. 4VP replied that the forms that do need to be reviewed do state “Thank you for filing your forms are under review, you will be notified when your forms are approved” 4VP will double check on California filing but noted that chapters are being told exactly what they are missing.

Financial Secretary Sonya Kay: Regarding Compliance of Financial Reports, she noted that they advise back to chapters that their items IE: Number 1,2,3 Financials have been received and are being reviewed. Once completed they reply to chapters IE: 1,2,3 Financials have been approved and that the chapter will be contacted by the 4VP for additional compliance requirements. They are being specific on what is approved and hoping that this alleviates issues.

Regarding Annual Reports, only 30% of chapters have completed them and only one was done correctly the first time. She feels that with 70% still needed she and her assistant will need additional help to review them all in a timely manner.

National Treasurer Alethea Tennill: Nothing additional to add.

Recording Secretary Amy Jo Hutchinson: Minutes approval needed

**Minutes Approval:**

Minutes from NEB meeting 10-10-2023 were sent to the NEB prior to this meeting from the National Secretary. Discussion was held regarding several punctuation errors that needed to be corrected.

**MOTION to approve Minutes from 10-10-2023 with punctuation errors corrected.**

**Seconded**

**Call for a vote.**

**no opposition, one abstention**

**PASSED**

Dept. of Michigan Trudy Wysocki: Nothing new to add to the report. Reported that her new chapter is applying for the National Grant and has also applied for the VA Rep as well.

Dept. of Ohio Diana Lynn Feldman: Nothing new to add to her report.

Dept. of Minnesota Jen Pecarina: Nothing new to add to her report.

Chaplain/ PNP Stacy Anders: Nothing new to add to her report.

PNP Carla Brodacki: Nothing new to add to her report.

PNP/ VAVS REP Anne Parker: She is looking at January to start removing names from her report that are no longer active at the VA hospitals or reporting to her.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Midyear meeting update: NP and 1<sup>st</sup> VP are working on menu and food. Coordinating flights for transportation. An email will be coming for amounts owed for coming in early or staying late. Please get those amounts paid to NFS by mid-December.

Governing documents update – Nothing new to update.

Leadership Handbook all board members are working to edit this handbook for ease of use. NP asking that all board members send what they have to PNP/ VAVS REP Anne Parker so we can start compiling what we have. So, we can review before Midyear. The plan is to roll out after Midyear. Keep it simple, but detailed.

Memorandum of Understanding-PNP/VAVS REP Anne Parker: Regarding MOU- between Gold Star Mothers of America and The American Legion

Auxiliary entered a Memorandum of Understanding for the purposes of mutual promotion of our non-profits. There is no cost for BSMA to also join in this and publicize that partnership. The MOU will be presented to the board for review before it is approved and signed hopefully by December.

National Past President and Past Department President Pins: Nothing to update regarding this currently.

25 Year Pins: Nothing to update regarding this currently.

Convention and Convention Fundraiser Ideas: We have chosen Oklahoma City for the 2024 National Convention. The dates are July 29 -August 2<sup>nd</sup>. This will be in the next newsletter and the Convention Chatter will also begin. A Convention fundraiser shirt will be released shortly through Bonfire. We are looking for a RED Friday shirt we can offer through Bonfire also. An actual convention shirt will be made later.

Standing Rules Approval: The NEB approved Department Standing Rules earlier this year. If any changes were needed once Departments approved those would be brought before the NEB.

**The Department of Minnesota** were not voted on, the plan is to work on them and readdress in the Spring.

**Department of Michigan** approved their rules with some grammatical rules needing changed and format of document.

**Department of Ohio** did approve their rules.

NFS is researching where it states that closed chapters will have their monies held by National for 12 months after closing. In the Michigan Standing rules under #17 it does state that if a new chapter opens within that county within 12 months the monies will be awarded to that chapter. She is questioning if that is listed in all Standing Rules for all Departments. 1VP noted that yes this is stated in Department of Ohio and that the Department holds that money for 12 months unless another chapter opens, and the money is sent to that new chapter. After twelve months the money is sent to the nearest VA hospital.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

National Veterans Day Ceremony in Washington, DC - NP did attend and was proud and honored to represent our organization. She met a person from the British Embassy and was invited to attend their ceremony in January 2024. She will be updating us as she gets the information for the trip. Will present to NEB for approval.

Rolling to Remember: Regarding a patch for us to sell. There was a rocker created for us. She plans to use that again this year. Rather than make a new patch she will use our metallic patch. The plan is to sell them as a set for \$10. The metallic patch and the rocker.

**MOTION** was made that we sell the metallic patch and rocker as a set for \$10. Motion was seconded. Friendly amendment to state the “3inch” patch with the rocker at Rolling to Remember.

**Call for a vote.**

**No opposed, No abstentions**

**MOTION PASSED**

1. IHG Rewards: At the previous meeting it was noted that the cost to move them to the current NP name would be too much. They are currently in the name of Anita Wagner as she was the Convention chair at the time they were awarded. Moving forward when booking we will make certain the points are in the name of the current NP. To make it easier to use them. As of now these points are in the Convention Chairperson’s name and it was requested that she be able to use them since cost prohibits moving them to NP name.

**MOTION** was made with the concurrence of our FCC that we allow Anita to use these IHG points personally.

**Motion was seconded.**

**Call for a vote.**

**No opposition, no abstentions**

**MOTION PASSED**

Norton Antivirus renewal: 2VP asked regarding renewal for Norton Antivirus on her laptop which is owned by National. NT purchased all laptops. She will be sending emails to all; you have a brief period of 48 hours to renew once she sends it to you. PNP Carla noted that every member on the NEB is to receive virus protection even on their own laptops. The board voted on this in prior years. There was some discussion regarding if this includes Department Presidents as well. NP stated that we will need to review minutes to verify who it includes as it was stated that any person on the NEB should be covered, not just elected officers.

**Reminders:** Our Newsletter needs articles and pictures.

Check your email daily and your SPAM folders.

**CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

NP took the NEB into Closed Executive Session at 8:35 P.m. CST and out at 10:37 P.M. CST.

**Additional Business for the Good of the Organization.**

PNP/ Chaplain Stacy Anders closed our meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Jo Hutchinson, National Recording Secretary

## National President Report

November 2023

- Attended the National Veterans Day Celebration in DC
  - Presented a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
  - Presented a check to WIMSA
- Conducted President business
  - Set up meetings
  - Reviewed documents
  - Prepared for upcoming engagements
  - Met with Governing Documents Chair
  - Met with the Financial Chair
  - Met with the Mentor Chair
  - Met with Convention Chair
- Attended Financial Committee meeting
- Attended Big Dipper meeting
- Attended all NEB meetings

Respectfully submitted,

**Rebecca**

Rebecca Stafford  
National President  
573-220-0807



## National 1st Vice President November Report 2023

-Attended all NEB Calls

-Attended Mentor Meeting

-Communicated through emails and phone calls with multiple members and those with Chapter questions

-Processed Renewals and New Memberships

-Assisted the National President when needed

-Provided support and information to all Chapters sending basic questions to the National 1<sup>st</sup>VP and forwarding to other officers if it was appropriate

-Working with the Webmaster, Fin Sec and Treasurer to process dues renewal questions and new members

-Working with the 4<sup>th</sup>VP on compliance issues regarding rosters and affiliation agreements

-Assisted in some Chapter issues and questions about elections and closings

-Working with a Chapter concerning protem questions, issues and concerns

-Assisted Chapters with navigating the website, their profile, dues, renewals and new memberships

-Approved Officer Rosters and Affiliation Agreements for 2023-2024

-Worked with the National President on Mid-Year plans

-Attended a Veteran event representing BSMA, Inc. in honor of Veterans Day

-Working with a Chapter to seat a Board and renew members

-Working with Chapters on correcting office rosters and affiliation agreements and basic questions for compliance

Respectfully Yours in Service,

Karen Stillwell

National 1<sup>st</sup> VP 2023-2024

[1vp@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:1vp@bluestarmothers.us)

[614-893-1180](tel:614-893-1180)



## National 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

### November Report

- Attended NEB Zoom meeting
- Participated in Department President meeting to introduce new Dept. of MN President
- Participated in Mentor meeting
- Reviewed emails for November Newsletter and verified receipt of each email
- Reviewed list from 3VP of October fallen Heroes
- Designed and edited pages for the November Newsletter
- Finalized November Newsletter
- Emailed National President and webmaster for approval and distribution of Newsletter
- Responded to texts, emails and phone calls

Respectfully submitted by

Karla Keller  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP



## National 3VP Report

November 1 – November 30, 2023

- Attended NEB meeting
- Researched 32 Military deaths
- Reported 31 Active Duty deaths
- Added 647 Veterans found on the PGR website for the month of November to the Veteran list
- Sent list and pictures of Active Duty deaths to Chaplain and 2VP
- Answered phone calls, emails and text messages

November 4vp report

As of 12/10/23 there are 54 chapters that have completed compliance and 2 auxiliaries (Gavel Club and OH Big Dipper)

13 Chapters haven't started compliance yet.

The rest are missing at least one item and I have sent emails with this regard

2 Departments haven't completed

National Big Dipper and MI Big Dipper Auxiliaries have missing items

I have sent out compliance reminders to the chapters/ auxiliaries/ Depts that have not completed

I have sent out 4New Chartering packets

Sadly, we are experiencing closures as well. Five chapters have informed me that they have voted to close: TX11, OH7, OK16, NJ1, MO7, OH10

## National Financial Secretary Report – November 2023

Attended NEB meeting(s)

Attended all Finance Committee Meetings

Emails, texts, calls - answered, responded, and filed as needed

Attended Department of Michigan Convention

### National Financial Assistant

She has worked on building spreadsheets with info needed to enter deposits into QB for November and has started December.

She is reviewing Annual Report Financial Documents and following up with Chapters for Compliance

### Compliance Financial Document Reviews by NFS, NFA, and PNP AP

64 reviews complete and approved, 17 in follow up process, 80 submitted and in queue to review as of 12-6-23. 32 chapters/auxiliaries have not submitted annual reports as of 12-6-23

### Financials:

Completed entering November deposits in QB for all 3 accounts, reconciled, reports created and sent to FC.

### Due to Chapter/Department Checks

Working with NT to prep next round of due to checks to be mailed in December.

### Incoming Mail:

Retrieved all incoming mail from PO Box. Opened and sorted mail into appropriate batches. Processed all mail.

Added mail to spreadsheets (mail received with funds, mail received without funds, member renewals, Convention)

Contacted appropriate NEB member/committee chair with scan of mail relevant to their needs or mail needed items to them

Deposited all funds received and entered deposits into QB

### Memberships

Working with 1VP to research all emails received from members with questions.

### Chapters

Worked with Chapters on various financial related questions.

### Mid Year

Receiving reimbursements from those NEB members staying extra days, tracking in spreadsheet.

### Rolling to Remember

Followed up with all invitees to determine their escort needs. communicated those to our Amvets liaison. Updated spreadsheets as requested by NP.

Submitted by Sonya Kay, National Financial Secretary - December 6, 2023



## **NATIONAL TREASURER REPORT**

**November 2023**

Attended all NEB Meetings

Attended Finance Committee Meeting

Made and received telephone calls, texts, and emails

Paid bills due in November

Posted and matched expenses in QuickBooks

Filled and mailed Online Store Orders –

    25 Stocking Stuffer Bundle Sold

    227 Ornaments Sold (between 11/27 and 12/5)

    Received 105 Online Store Orders in November

Completed/mailed all checks to Finsec

Responded to chapters with questions

Yours in Service,

Alethea Tennill

National Treasurer



Department of Michigan Presidents Report  
November 2023

- Attended the November NEB meeting.
- Conducted the Michigan DEB meeting.
- Attended the Mentoring Zoom meeting.
- Attended the Three Department Presidents meeting.
- Working on Conflict Resolution Team appointments.
- Working on Grievance Resolution Team appointments.
- Appointed my Mentor Chair.
- Attended MI197 Chapter meeting.
- Attended a Veterans Mass at a local high school.
- Attended Grand Rapids Veterans Ceremony.
- Submitted an article for the department to the National Newsletter for November.
- Answered phone calls, emails, and text messages regarding Department business.

Trudy Wysocki  
President Department of Michigan

**Department of Ohio**  
**November 2023 Report**

1. Attended monthly NEB zoom call
2. 1VP and PDP Karen Stillwell chaired monthly DEB meeting
3. 1VP Continued conversations with former OH7 officer to complete compliance/chapter closing procedures
4. 1VP made attempts to contact president for OH10 who will begin the process of closing
5. 1VP met with prospective new Ohio chapter
6. 1VP Attended 1 Veteran funeral
7. 1VP and 2VP contacted all chapters with outstanding compliance documents
8. Various emails and calls with Ohio Chapter Presidents, Department Officers, and the general public.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lynn Feldman, President  
Department of Ohio

## DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA NOVEMBER 2023 NEB REPORT

- I attended the October NEB meeting
- I submitted an article for the department to the national newsletter for November
- Members of the department helped to lay wreaths at gravesites at Fort Snelling National Cemetery
- I attended various Veterans Day events
- I attended the Department Presidents meeting

Jen Pecarina

President Department of Minnesota