



## **MEETING MINUTES**

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

**December 12, 2023**

**Call to order:** Our National Executive Board Meeting was called to order by National President Rebecca Stafford at 07:35 P.M. CST.

#### **Opening:**

PNP/ Chaplain Stacy Anders opened with prayer. 2VP Karla Keller 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 (Excused)
- Treasurer-Alethea Tennill
- PNP/Chaplain-Stacy Anders
- PNP-Carla Brodacki (Excused)
- PNP/VAVS REP-Anne Parker (Excused)
- Dept. MI President-Trudy Wysocki
- Dept. Ohio President-Dianna Lynn Feldman
- Dept. MN President-Jen Pecarina
- Parliamentarian-Patti Elliott (Excused)
- Finance Chair-Julie Straw

**Minutes Approval:**

Minutes from NEB meeting November 14, 2023, were sent to the NEB prior to this meeting from the National Secretary. The floor was open for discussion or corrections. Seeing no one, a motion was called to accept the minutes as written.

**MOTION to approve Minutes from 11-14-2023 as presented.**

**Seconded**

**Call for a vote.**

**no opposition, one abstention**

**PASSED**

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

**1. Finance Report**

FC meeting was held on Sunday, December 10, 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 December 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:** Contract with hotel has been signed, nothing to be done financially at this time.

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

Committee member and CFC Chair Christine McCracken provided an update on communications with M/M recommendations:

A. We have historically been registered under the National/International bracket with the CFC. It is suggested that we apply to the CFC under the “Military Federation” which will cover our application fee of \$271 and we would only incur the listing fee of \$234.

B. M/M - Individual state registrations

- 1) Registration is active in Ohio.
- 2) Need to register with State Attorneys General to pursue campaigns in other states.
  - a) Michigan & Oregon - no registration fee
  - b) Texas - \$5
  - c) New York & California - \$25 each
  - d) Georgia - \$35
  - e) New Jersey, Pennsylvania & North Carolina - sliding scale \$0-250 depending on funds raised - we expect to be in their respective \$0 categories.
- 3) C. McCracken will pursue registrations with those states so that campaigns can be launched on a trial basis.

C. [Fundraising@BlueStarMothers.us](mailto:Fundraising@BlueStarMothers.us) email is being reinstated and provided to C. McCracken for M/M/CFC use.

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

- A. NFS reported info from 4VP: 54 chapters are done, thirty-five chapters missing their 990, 6 chapters pending their 990. At least eighty chapters in the queue in some state of non-completion.
- B. Financial reviews are progressing, however both the NFS and the NFS assistant have matters of a serious personal nature in their families at the present time and patience is required. FC is suggesting that PNP Carla Brodacki be allowed to assist with the chapter financial information reviews at this time.

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

- A. NT is still communicating with Missouri Dept of Revenue regarding exemption from sales tax for the online store sales.
- C. Online Store:
  - 1) Brochures - available on the website.
    - a) Current printer vows to be better with communication and turnaround time – will hold pricing to the existing \$0.25 each for a five hundred qty order.
    - b) Staples (national availability) can match the \$0.25 each price if the quantity is 1,500.
    - c) Will stick with current printing source for the time being.

2) BSMA Ornaments - have sold at least 250 so far, one hundred have been sent, will fill in the backorders as soon as the next shipment arrives. Placed an order for two hundred more to keep in stock and have at convention.

3) Coins are being restocked - shipment in transit.

## **6. Chapter Grant Applications**

A. Motion coming from committee to approve the applications from existing chapter MN7, and new chapter MI201 funds will be released when compliance is completed.

**MOTION** is coming from committee to approve Grant Applications for MN7, and MI201 once Compliance is completed by those chapters.

No second needed coming from committee.

**Call** for a vote.

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

4VP noted that MN7 Compliance is completed and that MI201 is a new chapter so Compliance is not required of them this year. FC asked that the 4VP update the Google Doc shared Grants Compliance Spreadsheet to update the current completed chapter compliance so far this year.

## **7. New Business**

A. Flags - request from NP

1) DC Rep has custody of the BSMA flag & American flag with bags & poles. USA flagpole top is broken, both bags are in poor shape.

2) FC recommends that the Convention Committee be tasked with custody of a set of Branch flags, POW/MIA flag, respective poles, stands and bag (if needed).

3) Motion coming from committee to approve the purchase of the necessary flags, poles, stands and bags for DC Rep and Convention Committee, not to exceed \$1,250.

**MOTION** coming from committee to approve the purchase of the necessary flags, poles, stands, and bags. These are 3 x 5-foot flags for the DC Rep and Convention Committee, not to exceed \$1250.

**Discussion:** NP noted that National used to have their own flags and bags and they have been missing for the past several years. We had to borrow from local VSOs to use them when needed. To clarify the BSM Flag and the American flag would be retained by our DC Rep to be used for Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The rest of the flags will be retained by our Convention Chair and kept safely for use. Coming from the Committee a second is not needed.

**Call for a vote.**

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

B. Branch Hats - a new custom at Convention - were borrowed last year. FC recommends soliciting donations of hats from the membership or neighboring VSOs, but not to attempt to purchase hats at this time.

C. With the need to lift the Debit Card limit for NT to pay Convention expenses, it was determined that it would be wise to move the majority of the BSMA funds into savings to not be easily accessible. Motion coming from committee to maintain the BSMA checking account at no more than \$75,000 with the remaining funds to be held in the savings account until such time that they are needed.

**MOTION** coming from the Committee to maintain the BSMA checking account at no more than \$75,000 with the remaining funds to be held in the savings account until such time as they are needed for Convention.

**DISCUSSION:** NP opened floor for discussion. No questions or concerns were raised. Coming from the Committee a second is not needed.

**Call for a vote.**

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

8. Next FC monthly meeting will be on Sunday, January 7th, 2024. Finance Chair Julie Straw left the meeting at 8:01 p.m. CST.

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

1<sup>st</sup> VP Karen Stillwell: Noted that she will be traveling briefly during the holiday and may be delayed at follow up email or calls.

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

3<sup>rd</sup> VP Jacqueline Ransom: Nothing additional to report.

4<sup>th</sup> VP Brenda Ternullo: She noted that she completed training with TN7. She also met with MA1 and CA9.

National Treasurer Alethea Tennill: Nothing additional to add.

Recording Secretary Amy Jo Hutchinson: Nothing additional to add.

Dept. of Michigan Trudy Wysocki: Nothing new to add to the report.

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. NP asked if she had what she needed for the BSMA logo for the thirty-one bags. NT will send her a better digitized version of the logo.

Chaplain/PNP Stacy Anders: Nothing new to add to her report. Having technical difficulties with older computer, will send report when computer is finished updating.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Compliance Update: 4VP noted that she sent the NEB her worksheet showing chapter Compliance. She noted that some reports are still being reviewed. She did advise Department Presidents of which chapters still need help completing. State filing can be tough, chapters are working to complete this.

Midyear meeting update: NP and 1VP 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. 1VP noted she is working on the food shopping list, and our cost for food will be about \$40 each. There is transportation from the airport to the island. And golf cart transport on the island. The cost of transport from the airport will be covered. All other transport fees will come out of pocket. We need to decide on sleeping arrangements and let the NP know. We will be sharing beds.

Governing documents update – Nothing new to update. NP noted to the Dept of MI and Dept of MN Presidents that were not on the NEB until October that we are currently working to update our governing documents to present in draft format the membership at convention. Please take the time to review them and if you see errors or corrections contact Chair Pat Soler and her Governing Documents Committee who are compiling the suggested edits and corrections.

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- The American Legion Auxiliary is working on this. The MOU will be presented to the board for review before it is approved.

National Past President and Past Department President Pins: Nothing to update regarding this currently. NT is still working to get an update on this.

25 Year Pins: Nothing to update regarding this currently. NT will also work on this along with the NP on a design.

Convention and Convention Fundraiser Ideas: Nothing new to update currently. We will have a Veteran Mom shirt to roll out soon. We have chosen Oklahoma City for the 2024 National Convention. The dates are July 29 - August 2<sup>nd</sup>. 2VP and NP will work on the Convention Chatters to be coming out soon.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Holiday Break – December 21, 2023, through January 5, 2024. Please set your emails as out of office response so that communication is open.

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 8:27 p.m. CST and out at 9:13 p.m. CST.

**Additional Business for the Good of the Organization.** Seeing none, NP asked to close the meeting.

PNP/ Chaplain Stacy Anders closed our meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Jo Hutchinson, National Recording Secretary

## National President Report

December 2023

- 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 all NEB meetings

Respectfully submitted,

**Rebecca**

Rebecca Stafford

National President

573-220-0807



## National 1st Vice President December Report 2023

-Attended all NEB Calls

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

-Processed Renewals, New Memberships and Transfers

-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

-Composed and designed a 1VP page for the National Newsletter

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

-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

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

-Attended a Chapter meeting holding a Special Election meeting

-Working with Chapters on correcting office rosters, 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

### December Report

- Attended NEB Zoom meeting
- Reviewed emails for December Newsletter and verified receipt of each email
- Reviewed list from 3VP of November fallen Heroes
- Designed and edited pages for the December Newsletter
- Finalized December Newsletter
- Emailed National President and webmaster for approval and distribution of Newsletter
- Participated in Wreaths Across America
- Attended chapter meeting, via zoom, that has had issues seating a board and they were hoping to hold elections. Successful CEB elections were held.
- Responded to texts, emails and phone calls

Respectfully submitted by  
Karla Keller  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP



## National 3VP Report

December 1 – December 31, 2023

- Attended NEB meeting
- Researched 36 Military deaths
- Reported 36 Active Duty deaths
- Added 535 Veterans for the month of December to the Veteran list
- Sent list and pictures of Active Duty deaths to Chaplain and 2VP
- Assisted 3 chapters with Blue to Gold presentation questions
- Answered phone calls, emails and text messages

December 4vp report

1/8/24

As of 1/8/24 there are 67 chapters that have completed compliance and 3 auxiliaries (Gavel Club and OH Big Dipper) and only 1 Department

6 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 or need clarification

I have sent out compliance reminders to the chapters/ auxiliaries/ Depts that have not completed. I will be sending out emails to entire chapter members if chapter is not compliant by mid January (this weekend)

I have sent out 2 New Chartering packets

## **National Financial Secretary Report – December 2023**

Attended NEB meeting(s) - excused

Attended all Finance Committee Meetings

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

### **National Financial Assistant**

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

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

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

79 reviews complete and approved, 12 in follow up process, 77 submitted and in queue to review as of 1-7-23.

27 chapters/auxiliaries have not submitted annual reports as of 1-7-23

### **Financials:**

Completed entering December 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 asap..

### **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 - January 7, 2024



## **NATIONAL TREASURER REPORT**

**December 2023**

Attended all NEB Meetings

Attended Finance Committee Meeting

Made and received telephone calls, texts, and emails

Paid bills due in December

Completed and Returned Fraud Risk Form to CPA

Posted and matched expenses in QuickBooks

Filled and mailed Online Store Orders –

    25 Stocking Stuffer Bundle Sold

    308 Ornaments Sold (between 11/27 and 1/6)

    Received 50 Online Store Orders in December

Completed/mailed all checks to Finsec

Responded to chapters with questions

Yours in Service,

Alethea Tennill

National Treasurer



Department of Michigan Presidents Report  
December 2023

- Attended the December NEB meeting.
- No Michigan DEB meeting (not enough in attendance).
- Working on Conflict Resolution Team appointments.
- Delivered 2023 convention items to Detroit Veterans Hospital.
- Attended Operation Handshake (Christmas) at the Grand Rapids Airport.
- Convention location calling/visit.
- Big Dipper Emergency Board meeting.
- Michigan SIA Date set: April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Answered phone calls, emails, and text messages regarding Department business.

Trudy Wysocki  
President Department of Michigan

**Department of Ohio**  
**December 2023 Report**

1. Attended monthly NEB zoom call
2. Chaired monthly DEB meeting
3. Began researching venues for 2024 spring conference, and requested proposals
4. Phone contact with President of OH10 – closing procedures/current active chapter members
5. 1VP continued contact with prospective new Ohio chapter
6. 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

DECEMBER 2023 REPORT

1. Attended monthly NEB Zoom call
2. Wrote article for Department of MN newsletter
3. Communicated with Dept FinSec and chapters regarding compliance

Jen Pecarina

Department of Minnesota President