



## MEETING MINUTES

### BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC.

January 9, 2024

**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 (Excused)
- 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 (Excused)

**Minutes Approval:**

Minutes from NEB meeting December 12, 2023, were sent to the NEB prior to this meeting from the National Secretary. The floor was open for discussion or corrections. Noted one correction. A motion was called to accept the minutes with correction.

**MOTION to approve Minutes from 12-12-2023 with correction.**

**Seconded**

**Call for a vote.**

**no opposition, two abstentions**

**PASSED**

**Finance Committee Report – Presented by Sonya Kay, coming from Julie Straw- Finance Chair**

1. FC meeting was held on Sunday, January 6, 2024, 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. Discussion concerning uncashed VA checks** - These would be over two hundred days outstanding. These VA's will be sent a letter saying that within 15 days they either cash the check, request a replacement or the donation will be pulled back. 4<sup>th</sup> VP questioned that when those checks are absorbed back into the BSMA account that the funds go into the VA Hospital fund not the General Fund. The NP verified that yeas those amounts will remain in the VA Fund.

**3. Convention update:** first downpayment to the hotel has been made. NP can provide further updates.

Discussion of parameters of the Convention budget.

**4. Maguire/Maguire, Inc.** Committee member and CFC Chair Christine McCracken to meet with M/M on Monday, January 8th. No update to date from her regarding that meeting.

**5. 2023 Compliance** - NFS reported info from 4VP regarding Annual Reports only: seventy-nine chapters completed, twelve in review, seventy-seven received and in the queue, twenty-seven still lacking annual report.

**6. NT and NFS Reports:**

- A. NFS - expanded on the cost and work associated with chapter. intended donations coming through the National website Donate Now PayPal button. To date, National has been absorbing the fees associated with this use and sending full donations on to chapters. The fees are based on a percentage of the amount of the donation.
- B. The Committee has suggested that funds intended for Chapters/auxiliaries received through the national website's "Donate Now" PayPal button will be subject to all transaction fees and a \$2.50 processing fee.
- C. FC will be requesting that the webmaster reword the "Donate Now" area to reflect that the button is only for national BSMA, not chapters or auxiliaries.
- D. FC will be placing an article in the National newsletter regarding the above policy and put this on the website.
- E. This will be discussed during the Financial Policies Review. We will address the PayPal fees and then bring it to the floor at convention.

## 7. NT update

A. Waiting on communication from Missouri Dept of Revenue regarding exemption from sales tax for the online store sales.

B. Currently holding Due to Chapter checks awaiting compliance. this quarter's checks will be written and sent to the NFS for signature and she will mail them as compliance status is cleared. Departments will receive their checks but will need to hold the Chapter portions until Compliance is completed.

## 8. Online Store:

A. **MOTION** coming from committee to place a restocking order of 36 Blue Vests in many sizes from Small to 3X and increase the price for all vests to \$55.

NP reminded us that we had discussed this previously but had put this on hold as the cost had increased so much. If we raise the price that would allow National to make a couple of dollars per vest. Coming from committee a second is not needed.

**CALL** for a vote.

**No opposition, no abstentions.**

**MOTION PASSED**

B. **Upcoming bundle - Motion** coming from committee to approve a Valentine Bundle of a Tote Bag, Branch patch, nail file & cellphone card holder for \$25.

**Coming from committee a second is not needed.**

**CALL** for vote.

**No opposition, no abstentions,**

**MOTION PASSED**

9. **Chapter Grant Applications** - no additional grant applications received this month.

**Next FC monthly meeting will be on Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

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

1<sup>st</sup> VP Karen Stillwell: Noted that we continue to get renewals and new members.

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

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

She shared that Mary Johnson is training with the Casualty Assistance Officers in Minnesota with a power point she has created to show what Blue Star Mothers are and what we do. This is hopefully the first step through the doors in working with CAO's in the future.

4<sup>th</sup> VP Brenda Ternullo: Nothing additional currently.

National Financial Secretary Sonya Kay: nothing additional to add.

National Treasurer Alethea Tennill: Happy to report that all orders for Blue Star Mother ornaments have been shipped.

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.

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

PNP/VAVS Anne Parker: She will be asking the Finance Committee to approve the Parks scholarship \$2000, and she is working on this year's VAVS checks the conference where she presents the scholarship is in May in Columbia, SC.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Compliance Update: 4VP noted that she has sixty-seven chapters that completed compliance, 3 Auxiliaries, and one Department. Six Chapters had not even started Compliance yet. The remaining chapters are missing at least one item. An email was sent to those chapters directly. She has discussed sending a notice to the entire chapter alerting them that part of their chapter's Compliance needs to be completed.

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. This Amount covers four dinners, three breakfasts, three lunches. 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 by the organization as we are planned for under budget. Please bring cash for tipping. Reminder to bring a small gift for your sisters.

Governing documents update – NP noted that she received the By-Laws, the Affiliation Agreement, and the Constitution that the Governing Documents Committee has reviewed. The documents she received had the headers and spacing off. Brenda Russell is working to correct this and resend it to NP. She should have them by tomorrow. And she will go forward to the NEB. The Governing Documents Committee are next reviewing The Code of Conduct, which had the most changes. Once this is reviewed and completed, they will send it to the NP, and she will forward it to the NEB. This is so that we may review them prior to Mid-Year and be prepared with questions or concerns as we attend the Mid-Year Meeting.

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 her so she 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 Anne Parker stated that The American Legion Auxiliary is working on this we should have it in a month or so. 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. NP is going to keep us updated.

25 Year Pins: Nothing to update regarding this currently. NT will also work on this along with the NP on a design. The company that makes our Blue Star Mother Pin is interested in making the National Past President and Past

Department President pins as well as the 25-year pin. We are just working to get them the designs and graphics needed.

**Convention and Convention Fundraiser Ideas:** We have two suites and seven additional rooms. We will be sharing rooms as we did in the past. We have an even number of required attendees. One suite will be the NP. The second suite will be for the convention committee. It is her understanding that all three of those ladies will share that suite. The other six rooms will be shared, two people per room. The NEB Members and required appointed positions such as Parliamentarian and Governing Documents Chair. Those rooms are given at a discounted price, they are not free. The seventh room she is going to offer to the National Big Dipper President. Again, this room is not free, it is discounted. 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**

**Big Dipper Documents:** NP sent the NEB these documents prior to our meeting.

Document #1: JECA Rubric. Discussion was had regarding the changes in wording on this document. There were grammatical corrections. It was reiterated that this is an Educational Assistance fund and can be used at the discretion of the recipient. Not necessarily for tuition.

A MOTION was made to accept this Rubric for the National Big Dipper use with the grammatical errors corrected. The motion was seconded. NP called for the vote.

**CALL for vote.**

**No opposition, no abstentions,**

**MOTION PASSED**

Document #2: They are asking to change the wording from "Honorable Discharge Status." The NP noted that their verbiage needs to be exactly like our U.S. Code. Ours no longer states "Honorable Discharge" The

question from the BDNP was if the body needed to be informed of this change at convention or if the NBD could change the verbiage to mirror our verbiage which follows U.S. Code. The NEB agrees that this issue is resolved and that they National Big Dipper verbiage should mirror the U.S. Code as the BSMA already does.

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 9:01 p.m. CST.

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

Please note that the regular February NEB meeting will be postponed until the Mid-Year Meeting.

PNP Carla Brodacki closed our meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Jo Hutchinson, National Recording Secretary



## National 1st Vice President January Report 2024

-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 for food and transportation

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

-Set up member profiles for two new Chapters and sent welcome letters; provided instructions for rosters, new memberships and dues

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

-Composed a document for 1VPDuties/Membership for the new Leadership Handbook

Respectfully Yours in Service,

Karen Stillwell

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

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

### January 2024 Report

- Attended NEB Zoom meeting
- Reviewed emails for January Newsletter and verified receipt of each email
- Reviewed list from 3VP of December fallen Heroes
- Designed and edited pages for the January Newsletter
- Finalized January Newsletter
- Emailed National President and webmaster for approval and distribution of Newsletter
- Responded to texts, emails and phone calls
- Edited pdf files for PNP Anne for compliance
- Continued to review governing documents for Mid-Year
- Began document for 2VP section of the Leadership Handbook

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



## National 3VP Report

January 1 – January 30, 2024

- Attended NEB meeting
- Researched 38 Military deaths
- Reported 34 Active Duty deaths including 6 Repatriated
- Added 552 Veterans for the month of January to the Veteran list
- Sent list and pictures of Active Duty deaths to Chaplain and 2VP
- Worked with Department 3VPs and BtoG Liaison to start clarifying Blue to Gold procedures
- Spoke with possible source for Casualty Assistance Officer contacts;  
Honoringourfallen.org
- Attended Active Duty Death funeral
- Assisted chapters with Blue to Gold protocol questions
- Answered phone calls, emails and text messages

## National Financial Secretary Report – January 2024

Attended NEB meeting(s)  
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 January and has started February. She is reviewing Annual Report Financial Documents and following up with Chapters for Compliance.

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

162 annual report financial document reviews complete and approved, 19 in follow up process, 2 submitted and in queue to review as of 2-11-24.

11 chapters/auxiliaries have not submitted annual reports as of 2-11-24

### Financials:

Completed entering January 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, sorted those to be mailed and those to be held until compliance is complete, mailed all checks to chapters 4VP reported have completed compliance. 38 are still being held.

### 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 mail/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 - all have been received now.

Wrote Leadership Handbook National Financial Secretary page information.

Reviewed documents sent by NP to prepare for meetings.

### Rolling to Remember

Attended Rolling to Remember meeting.

Worked with NP to track attendee flight information and Monday group preferences. Updated spreadsheets as requested by NP.

Submitted by Sonya Kay, National Financial Secretary - February 11, 2024



## **NATIONAL TREASURER REPORT**

**January 2024**

Attended all NEB Meetings

Attended Finance Committee Meeting

Made and received telephone calls, texts, and emails

Paid bills due in January

Answered questions from CPA

Posted and matched expenses in QuickBooks

Filled and mailed Online Store Orders –

Received 26 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  
January 2024

- Attended the January NEB meeting.
- Held Michigan DEB meeting.
- Working on Conflict Resolution Team appointments.
- Attended/Participated in Big Dipper Board meeting (Pro Tem) President.
- Participated in the Mentor Meeting.
- Attended a Gold Star funeral.
- Participated in the (3) President meeting.
- Participated in the Training of MI202.
- Participated in the funeral for our Blue Daisy – Jan VanderWal
- Answered phone calls, emails, and text messages regarding Department business.

Trudy Wysocki  
President Department of Michigan

**Department of Ohio**

**January 2024 Report**

1. Attended monthly NEB zoom call
2. Chaired monthly DEB Zoom call with Chapter presidents
3. Completed Annual Report questions which the Department's Financial Secretary emailed to each of the DEB members
4. Conference call with Department Past Presidents and OH10 about closing procedures
5. Worked with 2VP on Department newsletter
  - Submitted President's message/Personal Bio/Reviewed and Edited
6. Attended Mentor zoom meeting
7. Continued investigating venues for the Ohio spring North South Conference
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 MN January report

Attended the NEB zoom meeting

Represented the department at the St Paul Winter Carnival Grand Day Parade

Discussed plans for spring meeting with hosting chapter

Held DEB meeting

Submitted department photo/article for national newsletter