

**Meeting of the
BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC.
National Big Dipper Board
Monday, April 13, 2026 via Zoom**

Call to Order and Welcome:

The National Big Dipper President called the meeting to order at 5:07pm PT and welcomed all in attendance.

Opening Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance and Big Dipper Preamble:

The Financial Secretary, Pro-Tem opened in prayer, and everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by reading the Preamble.

Roll Call:

The Recording Secretary took attendance by reading the names listed below.

Present:

- President– Connie M. Shuck
- Recording Secretary – Julie McGaha
- Financial Secretary – Lorraine Camire, Pro-Tem
- Treasurer – Jan Rusk, Pro-Tem
- National President – Karen Stillwell
- Parliamentarian – Brenda Ternullo

Absent and Excused:

- 1st Vice President – Penni Holmes
- Dept of OH BD President – Kim Stock Foster
- Dept of MI BD President – Claudette Talbot
- PNPBD-1 – Pat Lomonaco
- PNBBDP-2/Chaplain – Doreen Berggren
- PNBBDP-3 – Beth Bohannon

Approval to Record the Board Meeting: Presented by the National Big Dipper President

The approval to record must be obtained at the start of each meeting. The recording of the April meeting was unanimously approved. Having no objections, the meeting will be recorded.

Motion: Financial Secretary, Pro-Tem

Approval of Minutes: Presented by the National Big Dipper President

The minutes of the March 11, 2026 meeting were approved with corrections, after a motion was made and seconded.

Motion: Treasurer, Pro-Tem

Presidents Reports:

- **National President:** Presented by the National President

The National President reported that the Ohio Big Dipper held a brown bag raffle at their recent conference and raised over \$800, which was considered a strong success. In addition, they have launched an online raffle project featuring themed baskets valued between \$150 and \$350. The project will be promoted on Facebook and is open to all members nationwide. She then gave an update on convention including the schedule will follow the familiar structure members are used to: the President's Project Walk will take place on Sunday before convention and the President's Reception will be held on Monday evening. Tim Maggart will be providing our keynote in a new and exciting way this year—rather than a traditional guest speaker. He'll be performing a keynote concert on Friday night, which promises to be a lot of fun for everyone. Throughout the week we also have several surprises planned, adding a little extra excitement to the familiar convention schedule.

We are dividing this year's donations between two veteran groups based on each organization's needs and available space. If your state does not begin with the letter "M," you may send sweats to the address previously provided. States beginning with "M" are asked to contribute gift cards for the local VA hospital, as the facility does not have room to store sweats like they did last year. All sweats collected will be delivered to the Central Ohio Veteran Stand Down, where every participant is verified upon entry. This ensures that all donated items directly support veterans who truly need them.

The National President closed with a challenge to push our membership number higher before convention and especially during it. She stated that National has already surpassed our projected new-member budget, which is a huge milestone, and she would love to see the Big Dipper grow right alongside us.

- **National Big Dipper President:** Presented by the National Big Dipper President

The National Big Dipper President stated she has been coordinating with Alyssa, who is now serving as our Fun Night event coordinator. Kara handled the initial booking phase when we secured the venue, but we've since been transitioned over to Alyssa for all event-related details moving forward. This should help streamline communication as we get closer to convention and begin finalizing the logistics. An update will be presented at our May meeting.

She then stated how she continues to talk about JCEA everywhere she goes to make sure people know what opportunities we offer. So far, only one application has been received even though over fifty (50) has been distributed. Unfortunately, many people wait until the last minute to submit their application. A question was asked about trade schools, and if they are accredited, they qualify.

Financial Reports: Presented by the Treasurer Pro-Tem

Our financial team has been working diligently to create consistency across the board by aligning our processes with those used by the NEB. We're committed to following the same guidelines and utilizing the same programs to ensure everything is streamlined and uniform. We've been collaborating closely with them throughout this process and have come a long way.

As the updated inventory count is now complete, the inventory section in QuickBooks has inconsistencies between the physical count, the QuickBooks records, and the order forms. The Financial team has been consulting with National to understand their processes and get guidance on how best to clean things up. One issue is that invoices and sales receipts haven't been used consistently in the past, and many sales appear to have been entered manually, which may not properly adjust inventory. Since National uses invoices, a recommendation was made to activate the invoicing feature in QuickBooks, pending board approval.

The board reviewed the financial documents distributed in advance, and with no questions or clarifications, the reports were set aside for review.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to activate the invoicing feature in QuickBooks to properly utilize invoices and sales receipts for transactions allowing for accurate tracking of inventory.

Motion: Financial Secretary, Pro Tem

National Convention – Board Member Travel: Presented by the National Big Dipper President
The National Big Dipper President requested everyone to send their travel information to the Recording Secretary. A spreadsheet will be created showing arrival and departure times so we can coordinate work sessions such as: Assembly of silent auction baskets, prepare the white-bag raffles, and putting together the notebooks and folders for our annual meeting, including all financial reports and convention-related materials will need to be completed. Also, an August 1, 2026 a transition meeting will be scheduled to include current and newly elected Board members.

Fun Night Committee Report: Presented by the National Big Dipper President
The next Fun Night committee meeting will be tomorrow evening. We have received several encouraging responses for dessert donations including at least six dozen cookies and homemade chow mix with an expectation we may receive even more as we get closer to convention. Additional details will be reported once clarification with our event coordinator about what we can and cannot do on site.

Big Dipper Banner / Tablecloths: Presented by the National Big Dipper President
The Treasurer, Pro- Tem, reported on tablecloth and banner options available using a 15% discount. After a brief discussion, a motion was made, seconded and passed to purchase a Big Dipper Banner, up to \$150. The Parliamentarian offered to make an in-kind donation to purchase the banner, and her generosity was thanked by all.

Motion: Treasurer Pro-Tem

An additional motion was made, seconded and passed to purchase a Big Dipper tablecloth, up to \$150.

Motion: Treasurer Pro-Tem

Website Store Update: Presented by the Financial Secretary, Pro-Tem
In reviewing the recent financial and inventory work, a realization that the shipping costs listed on our order form were outdated. To ensure accuracy, the form will be updated, and state shipping costs will be based on the actual package weight at the time of mailing,

Quilt Fundraiser: Presented by the National Big Dipper President
The board was informed that we will be receiving a donated quilt for Fun Night. At that point, we can decide whether to auction it or offer it through a raffle, depending on what works best for the event.

Midyear Review of Documents: Presented by the National President
The leadership handbook is currently under review. The individual assigned to evaluate it is still working through the document, and we will receive feedback once they have completed their review on their end.

Membership Update: Presented by the National Big Dipper President
In the absence of the 1st VP, the National Big Dipper President state that we currently have 226 members.

Before the meeting was adjourned, there was a brief convention discussion regarding number of tables needed along with early access to the room. Currently there is a request for one (1) vendor table and two (2) tables for registration. Early access to room will follow the NEB's schedule.

Adjournment: At 6:01pm PT, the President requested to end the meeting.

The next meeting will be on Monday, May 11, 2026, via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie McGaha
Recording Secretary