

**Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.**  
**National Executive Board**  
**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Meeting Date: 5/16/2012**

---

**Call to Order:**

A special board meeting of the BSMA NEB was held on 5/16/12 by electronic means (Go to Meeting) telephone and computer. The meeting convened at 8:35pm (EDT), President Robin McCarthy presiding and Charilyn Damigo, Recording Secretary. A quorum was present.

**Attendees:**

**Members in attendance:**

President Robin Barnes-McCarthy	Dept of AZ Pres Rebecca Leatherwood
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President Janet Broussard	Dept of OK Pres Cathy O'Shields
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President Rev. Lin McGee	Dept of MI Pres Kristine Wirgau
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice President Teresa Bullock	PNP Susan Nail
4 <sup>th</sup> Vice President Rose Ann Elliott	PNP Karen Stevens
Recording Secretary Charilyn Damigo	Chaplain Gloria Cervantes
Financial Secretary Anne Parker	

**Absent:**

Dept of MN Pres Jean Duane

**Excused:**

Treasurer Julie Roberts  
Dept of OH Pres Pat Pell

Roll Call of Officers -- (Charilyn Damigo)

**New Business**

American Signature Furniture/Value City Furniture Program

**Background:** NP Robin had contacted the Columbus chapter president in March and asked if she could help with funding/sponsorships for the convention and yearbook. She initially declined due to personal issues, but later called NP Robin back in a conference call with Heather (American Signature Furniture/Value City Furniture). ASF is planning to give away \$1 million in furniture between Memorial Day & Labor Day. The administration of the vouchers would be distributed between 3 groups, BSMA would be one (\$333K to each – others might be USO, American Legion – Robin is not sure). NP Robin met with marketing team at end of April to hear their proposal. They want to give furniture to returning OIF/OEF veterans or returning troops; would like short summary (500 words or less) of what they would like to do with furniture (“slept in a cot for 13 mos. & would like a new bed”) and a video or picture of troops receiving the items. They would like BSMA to determine who would receive \$500 - \$1000 vouchers (retail cost of item). They currently have approximately 125 stores in 18 states; all are east of Mississippi.

**Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.**  
**National Executive Board**  
**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Meeting Date: 5/16/2012**

---

If BSMA were to accept this offer, NP Robin proposes establishing a committee with a neutral scoring system; veterans must be willing to be on video for advertising purposes. Committee would need to identify eligible candidates; store would make final determination of giveaway.

NP Robin met again with the full marketing team. They are moving forward with furniture giveaway – need our approval to oversee the voucher system.

Concerns raised by NEB members:

- American Signature Furniture was the company that was supposed to come through for us with the money to cover the cost of the new website, Shoebox project, convention sponsorships, and these have all fallen through. What makes us think that this would be any different?
  - They did give us the contributions that were received at stores (approx. \$900)
  - NP Robin did mention at the mid-year NEB, that there was a varied response from different stores & chapters.
  - This company was asked to consider being a “platinum” sponsor for yearbook/convention (\$25K donation). As of May 11 – they have decided that they are not going to sponsor yearbook or convention. However, this is a moot point – NP Robin has requested corporate sponsors from many companies, not just this one.
- If we partner with someone it is then a National project for our organization. How can partnering with American Furniture Company be a national project when all of their stores are east of the Mississippi and the program will not include our chapters in other areas across the country?
  - 5% of the program would be factored in for troops who are out of the area but have family in the store area.
- Concerns about the 'statements' and the 'videos' -- what are they going to do with them? It appears that they are going to promote their furniture store sales by utilizing personal stories of our heroes. Would this be exploiting them?
  - Essay would only become property of ASF upon receipt of voucher (those who were not selected would not have their videos/essays released)
  - Those with security clearances, etc. would know in advance and could decide for themselves whether or not to participate.
  - “Exploit” is probably too strong of a word, but yes, they are doing this as a marketing campaign. However, our troops still benefit.
- It is not appropriate for another company, organization, etc. to use our National Website. This includes issues such as -- why would our organization pay for a website for another company, organization, group, etc. to use? It also includes issues with our governing documents (that we are not to endorse other businesses). It potentially brings up the problem that if we let this company use our website, then we would have to be open to also allowing other companies who are doing something for our heroes to use our website. Another company should NOT have access to our website.
  - No one would have access to our website. There would be an application available on the website that could be downloaded and sent in.

**Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.**  
**National Executive Board**  
**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Meeting Date: 5/16/2012**

---

- The three month roll out of the campaign and the campaign itself running from May 25 through September 3 is problematic in 'time frame', as the 2012-2013 NP and NEB will be in place and responsible to carry out something the 2011-2012 contracted on.
  - This is a concern, the current NEB would need to put a committee in place that would carry through to the end of the campaign.
- If the BSMoA are going to be making all of the decisions about who does and who doesn't get the vouchers for the furniture -- that lets ASF/VCF off the hook legally and ethically should anything come up which questions why who was selected to be the recipient over another person.
  - Long-term BSMA policy not to endorse private companies
  - Concerns about making this major of a decision in such short notice without the opportunity to bring this to our membership
  - Precedent has been set with having Capitol One credit card link on our website
  - Company has made large donations to Columbus chapter in the past
  - Company wanted to meet needs of "regular" returning troops rather than Wounded Warriors, etc.

NP Robin will let ASF/VCF know that BSMA does not wish to use our logo to advertise other companies' products at this time. Consensus from the NEB appears to be in the negative; no vote called.

**Adjournment**

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:32pm (EDT)