

Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
October 26, 2023 7pm via Zoom

Board members present at the meeting: David B, Dave T, Scot and Steve

Board members absent from the meeting: Drew, Ron, Vinney

Guests present at the meeting: George, Linda, Mike, Tim, Will

Secretary (Steve)

A **motion to approve the minutes** as submitted (but one small typo fixed) from the September 23rd Independence Squares Board meeting was made by Steve and seconded by David B. **Passed unanimously.**

Steve sent a link to board members with the unredacted minutes of several years of board meetings and suggested that they bookmark the link. Anyone with the link will be able to read those minutes. David B. is going to look into changing this setting so that only current board members can have access to the unredacted minutes. Redacted minutes can be found on the club website. These two locations are the only places that minutes are stored.

Treasurer (Ron submitted a report.)

Ron's report was shared with those present at the board meeting though he was not present.

Ron would like us to approve an updated **Treasurer and Finance Committee Procedures** document that is now recommended by the Finance Committee. We discussed those procedures and felt comfortable with most of them. There was a feeling amongst some in attendance however that we shouldn't accept the procedure that only one signature be allowed on a check in some circumstances since this is in contradiction to the bylaws. Some people felt that we should wait until the bylaws are changed before we approve this procedure. Rather than change the text of the **Treasurer and Finance Committee Procedures** document when Ron was not present we again tabled its approval or approval with a small amendment until the next board meeting.

David B agreed to work on a proposed amendment to the bylaws for our June 2024 Independence Squares Annual Meeting that would allow for one signature on a check in certain circumstances and Tim agreed to help. David suggested that he could chair a reactivated Bylaws Committee should Drew appoint him. He would also like to change the name of the board position currently called Publicity Chair.

Caller Liaison Committee (Mike and Linda submitted a report)

Mike and Linda discussed the report. It is included with these minutes.

Several people expressed enthusiasm for the idea of a 35th Anniversary of the Founding of Independence Squares Dance in late May.

We discussed the possibility of having a joint dance with Times Squares in Chatham NJ on January 27. Mike and Steve will work with Jim Babcock from Times Squares to move ahead with this possibility. Steve will contact the Lutheran Church in Philadelphia about the other dates listed in the report to see if the Red Cross room is available.

Mike suggested that the Finance Committee work up a template for formal agreements between two or more clubs that want to cosponsor a dance. Tim also agreed that such an agreement should be between the boards of the various clubs rather than between the caller liaisons. Steve agreed to work with the Finance Committee to draft such an agreement and to take the lead in broaching the cosponsorship agreements with the other clubs.

There was a long discussion about whether or not to change the date of Glitter Ball 2024 from December 7 to December 14 because the caller we want is not available the 7th but would be available on the 14th. At the end of the discussion David B made **a motion that the date of Glitter Ball 2024 remain December 7**. Scot seconded. **Passed unanimously**. Mike and Linda will look for a caller for December 7, 2024.

Steve made **a motion that the date of Glitter Ball 2025 be December 6**. David B seconded. **Passed unanimously**. Mike and Linda will ask the caller discussed above if he will call for Glitter Ball 2025 on that date.

The Caller Liaison Committee is concerned that there may be a change of date for Philadelphia Freedom Fly-In 2026. They were working with the information provided to them and contracted (verbally) 3 callers for March 13-15, 2026. Since then some members of the Fly-In Committee have a concern that WASCA will conflict with that date. After some discussion, it was agreed that Mike will write to Ron (in his capacity as one of the Fly-In cochairs) and let him know that the board supports the current date and slate of callers for Fly-In 2026.

Steve brought up the possibility of participating as a club in the Federation of Delaware Valley Square Dance Clubs' annual Graduation Dance. Our role would only be to encourage the Federation to renew their tradition of holding this dance and promoting the dance amongst our membership. It looks like the Federation would be paying for the event and it looks like it would be free to all participants. People at the meeting liked the idea of participating in this event but were concerned about sending our dancers into a situation where they may face some discomfort at being in a minority. It was suggested that we encourage our students to go but offer some strategies to them beforehand. For example, squaring up with other members of our club and letting members of other clubs join us might be a good idea. No action is required on the board's part for now but Steve will continue to work with the Federation and communicate Independence Square's enthusiasm to participate in the Federation Graduation Dance.

Fly-In Committee

Ron submitted a report containing updates from the Committee's October 12 meeting. The report is included in these minutes but we did not discuss it other than the potential date of the 2026 Fly-In as noted above.

Publicity Committee

David B commented on his work towards keeping the website up to date and getting flyers made for upcoming dances.

Steve mentioned his feeling that flyers should include an inclusivity statement as has been recent practice. We have been writing some variation on "Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ square dance club welcomes all to our inclusive dance community" on much of our publicity.

Recruitment Committee (no report submitted)

Steve tabled his report from this committee until our next board meeting.

Health and Safety Procedures (Linda submitted a report)

The report is included with these minutes.

In particular the HASP Committee wanted input from the board about how to fund their upcoming CPR and AID training.

After some discussion it became apparent that the training should just be for our club and not include members of the public. In other words this will not be a joint endeavor with the church.

Steve made a **motion** that **"Given that we can get at least 8 people to take the class and given that it can take place in the Red Cross Room, Independence Squares will budget an additional \$1000 to the HASP Committee to help them fund the upcoming CPR/AID Red Cross training in such a way that Independence Squares Club Members only have to pay \$25."** Dave T seconded the motion and it **passed unanimously.**

Mainstream and Plus Program Representative (Vinney)

No report

Advanced and Challenge Program Representative (Dave T)

Dave T tabled his report until the next meeting.

New Business

Ron bought Halloween treats for all attendees on Tuesday night, October 31. He spent about \$90 which he had intended to cover with his own money.

Steve made a **motion** that **Independence Squares reimburse Ron for the totality of what he spent on Halloween treats.** Dave T seconded. **Passed unanimously.**

Will brought three upcoming webinars offered by the United Square Dancers of America to our attention that may be of interest to the board members. David B expressed interest in the webinar

about making your website vibrant. The three seminars are described here. <https://www.usda.org/WEbinar/2023-11-11.php>

Old Business

Dave suggested that we have a sign in sheet at Glitter Ball that asks dancers if they are first timers. We would then recognize them by name during announcements. Dave will make that sign in sheet. We tabled discussion of inviting Mainstream students to our 2024 Fly-In.

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 9:00pm

INDEPENDENCE SQUARES TREASURER'S REPORT

OCTOBER 26, 2023

- A cumulative profit and loss summary is included with this report. This represents the period of June 1, 2023, through September 30, 2023.
- The PNC signature card has been completed. The signers on all accounts now reflect the proper individuals.
- As reported in last month's Treasurer's report, we were due for a payment to the Langhorne Sheraton on 10/6/23 in the amount of \$2400.00. The represents the second installment for the 2024 Fly-In. The Sheraton pulled that payment from our account on 10/16/24. This payment was delayed due to a failure on the part of the Sheraton's finance department to pull the payment on the due date despite arrangements having been made in advance for them to do so. The final payment of \$2400.00 is due 3/22/24.
- Our post office box was renewed for one year, with a payment in the amount of \$274.00 being mailed to them on 10/5/23.
- A document containing proposed changes to the "Treasurer and Finance Committee procedures" is enclosed for approval by the board. It has been approved by three of the four Finance Committee members. One member did not comment. The board needs to discuss this at this October 26 meeting.
- The next prepaid period for the Tuesday classes runs from 11/7/23 to 12/19/23. This needs to be communicated to the membership.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Rumble
Independence Squares' Treasurer

Treasurer and Finance Committee Procedures

August 2021 Draft

Proposal: Change to “October 2023”

Finance Committee

The Independence Squares Finance Committee shall include the Treasurer and three other board members. The incoming president shall appoint the Finance Committee at the board meeting that follows the annual board election, subject to ratification of the full board.

No change

Checking Account Access

Proposed title change: “Financial Account Access”

Rationale: Our financial assets now include more than just a checking account. We currently have an account with PayPal as well as a savings account and Certificate of Deposit. The current title fails to include these accounts.

The outgoing and incoming Treasurer shall arrange for the Finance Committee members to be signers on the IS checking account(s), and to remove any signers who are no longer on the Finance Committee.

Proposed change:

The outgoing and incoming Treasurers shall arrange for the Finance Committee members to be signers on all Independence Squares financial accounts and shall remove any signers who are no longer on the Finance Committee.

Rationale:

This section needs to be broadened to include “all” financial accounts since we now have a CD, a savings account, and a PayPal account. We could also have other types of accounts in the future. The existing document fails to include those accounts.

The Treasurer shall set up sub-accounts so that the other members of the Finance Committee can login and review the checking account transactions and statements.

Proposed change:

The Treasurer shall ensure that all members of the Finance Committee have online access to all financial accounts where permitted by the financial institutions.

Rationale:

The term “sub-accounts” is not accurate when it comes to granting online access to multiple individuals. Granting online access better describes the method of providing transparency to the Finance Committee members. This wording also addresses the possibility of a financial institution not allowing for multiple login ID’s.

Checks and Electronic Payments

Paper checks shall be signed by two members of the Finance Committee, as provided in the bylaws of the organization.

Proposed change:

Paper checks shall be signed by two members of the Finance Committee, as provided in the bylaws of the organization. In the case where two physical signers are not available, the issuance of a check shall be authorized via email by two Finance Committee members. In no case shall a check be authorized by the person to whom the payment is being issued. Copies of all such approvals shall be saved online in a place where members of the Finance Committee can review them.

Rationale:

The requirement to have two Finance Committee members sign all checks is cumbersome during times when our club is not meeting in person. Allowing for email approval by at least one other Finance Committee member allows for timely payments to be made during these times.

Electronic payments include checking account bill pay and debit card payments, PayPal, and other digital payment methods that may be authorized by the Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall get approval of another Finance Committee member by email before making an electronic payment. When a payment is being made to a member of the Finance Committee, two other members of the Finance Committee shall approve it. A copy of these emails shall be saved online in a place where members of the Finance Committee can review them.

Proposed change:

Electronic payments (including checking account bill pay and debit card payments, PayPal, and other digital payment methods) shall be authorized via email by two members of the Finance Committee. In no case shall such a payment be authorized by the person to whom the payment is being issued. A copy of these emails shall be saved online in a place where members of the Finance Committee can review them.

Rationale:

This removes some ambiguity by changing the requirement from “may be authorized” to “shall be authorized” and clarifies that two Finance Committee members are required for approval.

Financial Records

The Treasurer shall keep a checking account ledger using Google Sheets, Microsoft Excel or similar software. The Treasurer shall provide online access to this ledger to the other members of the Finance Committee.

Proposed change:

The Treasurer shall provide copies of all financial statements monthly to the board for review.

Rationale:

I am using QuickBooks instead of Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel to maintain our financial records. This qualifies under the term “or similar software”. However, because I use a desktop version of QB, it is not possible to provide online access to the ledgers for the other Finance

Committee members to view them. The proposed change keeps the intent of this section without specifying that a “ledger” be provided to the board.

The Treasurer shall prepare Income Statement and Balance Sheet reports monthly for review by the IS Board.

No change

Independence Squares' fiscal year is January 1st to December 31. Financial records are maintained on a cash basis, with one exception: income and expenses for the Independence Squares Fly-in are recorded in the month the Fly-in occurs. Advance registration payments and advance payments to callers and vendors are treated as unearned income and prepaid expenses respectively.

No change

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – October 2023

The information below is accurate as of Sunday, October 22, 2023, and may not reflect any updates received after this report's preparation. Please note that all dances are at the Lutheran Church unless otherwise noted.

Opening Discussions/Notes for Board

No additional contracts or promises have been made to any caller regarding the holding of workshops or classes, virtual or live, other than those listed below.

- 1) The dates and callers for the 2024 Glitter Ball and the 2026 Fly-in need to be discussed at the upcoming board meeting as various concerns have been raised by the board.
- 2) The August Summer Splash dance has raised various concerns and questions. Items for board discussion include the co-sponsorship with other clubs, the financial arrangements, and the location.
- 3) Several dates were suggested to the board for dancing in 2024 (January 27 or 20, February 24, and March 16) that we have not heard back about. We also suggested holding a May 18, 2024 dance to celebrate 35 years of the club's founding.

Dances Through April 2026

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place October 2023 through March 2026.

Saturday, December 2, 2023 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Betsy Gotta 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm The Merion Meeting House

April 2024 Fly-In: Callers: Darren Gallina, Betsy Gotta, Bill Harrison April 5-7, 2024

Saturday, December 7, 2024 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Caller and Space TBD

April 2025 Fly-in: Callers: Jeremy Butler, Vic Ceder, Don Moger April 4-6, 2025

March 2026 Fly-in: Callers: Two confirmed waiting on third response March 13-15, 2026

Open Houses and Classes

The Mainstream Class and C1 Workshop with Betsy Gotta began September 19, 2023.

The Plus Class and Advanced Class with Mark Franks began September 19, 2023.

FYI Notes

- 1) Betsy Gotta will not be available on January 9, 2024 and again on March 26, 2024. Attempts are being made to hire substitute callers. When a caller is contracted, the board will be notified.

INDEPENDENCE SQUARES FLY-IN COMMITTEE REPORT

OCTOBER 26, 2023

- As reported in last month's Treasurer's report, we were due for a payment to the Langhorne Sheraton on 10/6/23 in the amount of \$2400.00. The represents the second installment for the 2024 Fly-In. The Sheraton pulled that payment from our account on 10/16/24. This payment was delayed due to a failure on the part of the Sheraton's finance department to pull the payment on the due date despite arrangements having been made in advance for them to do so. The final payment of \$2400.00 is due 3/22/24.
- As of 10/18/23, we have a total of 86 dancers registered. This represents 74 new registrations, 11 carryovers, and 1 transfer. Total dollars received in registration fees are \$7265.00.
- A Fly-In committee meeting was held on October 12, 2023. The following items were discussed:
 - The date for the 2026 Fly-In will be March 13-15, 2026. New information has subsequently been obtained during a conversation between Ron and Daryl Davis, an officer with WASCA. We have learned that the WASCA festival might be folding in another year, but if they do continue to exist in 2026, their festival for that year will likely be March 13-15, 2026. Mary Kay has been advised of this. Bob and Mary Kay are away at the moment so another conversation about this conflict will be held after they return from their trip.
 - Callers selected for the 2026 Fly-In are Sandie Bryant, Ted Lizotte, and Chris Philips. Alternates are Barry Clasper, Ken Ritucci, and Kris Jensen. The Caller Liaison committee has been advised to reach out to these callers. Ron has subsequently advised the Caller Liaison committee of the possible conflict with WASCA and has suggested that we hold off on making any firm commitment to these callers until the committee can discuss this issue further.
 - The committee also discussed new information that has been received regarding the pending sale of the Langhorne Sheraton. It was generally felt, due to conversations that Ron has had with the Sheraton about this matter, that we likely will be able to hold our 2024 event there, without any issues, but that our 2025 event could be affected. Bob & Mary Kay, Ron, Vinney, and Mike will plan to meet with the General Manager of the hotel to have an in-person conversation to assess the GM's thoughts about our future events at his hotel.
 - Prior to learning of the Sheraton's sale, Ron had already begun a discussion with the hotel about hosting our 2026 event. They are willing to host us on March 13-15, 2026, but with a pricing increase. The ballroom fee will increase from \$6600.00 in 2025 to \$7372.51. The sleeping room rate will increase from the 2025 rate of \$137.00 to \$139.00. Ron also reached out to the Langhorne Radisson Hotel, who had been eager to book us for 2024. They quoted a ballroom cost of over \$10,000 and they could not commit to a sleeping room rate at this time, saying instead that it would likely be about \$179.00. No further discussions have been held with either hotel at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Rumble

Independence Squares' Fly-In Co-Chair

CPR & AED

HASP reviewed information on CPR and AED training and decided that Red Cross would be our preferred provider. HASP presented options for payment to the board:

- Ask the IS Board to fully fund the training for all those participating, or
 - Ask each individual to pay the full costs, or
 - Ask each individual to pay a modest amount to offset part of the cost. Folks do value something they pay for more than something they're given. Maybe \$25 for club members and the full \$86 for non-members?
 - Ask IS Board to pay for club members only and open it up to non-club members, if they want to pay part (or all) of the cost.
 - Ask the Church where we dance if they would like to participate in the training and share the costs;
 - They already own an AED machine, or
- Invite other square dance clubs if they would like to participate and share the costs.

HASP also asked the board to consider accepting donations from the IS community to help pay the costs.

HEPA FILTER AIR PURIFIERS

HASP reviewed several models of HEPA filter air purifiers and selected one based on size, amount of air filtered per hour, cost, ability to filter viruses, and high ratings. It has been purchased and installed in the larger dance room and the callers and dancers have reported no distractions from noise or size.

HASP accepted a donation of a HEPA filter air purifier from an IS club member and that unit is being used in the smaller dance room, again with no reports of distractions.

COVID VACCINATIONS and TESTS

HASP sent a notice to the IS email list of the availability of the latest COVID vaccines, other communicable disease vaccines, and how to obtain free COVID test kits.

IS WEBSITE UPDATE

HASP worked with the IS board to update the language on the IS website concerning no longer requiring waivers and release of liability, precautions on not dancing while feeling ill, and the STOP sign language to meet current CDC recommendations.

BUDGET

HASP received an annual budget of \$1000.00 from the IS board to be able to make purchases to support the health and safety of those attending our events. The budget is to be reviewed by each year's annual meeting.

FIRST AID KIT

HASP purchased a basic first-aid kit and puts it out during weekly classes.

MASK WEARING

HASP supports the option of wearing masks while dancing, but not requiring mask wearing.