

## **Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting**

**April 25, 2024 7pm via Zoom**

**Board members present at the meeting: David B, Dave T, Drew, Ron, Scot, Steve and Vinney**

**Guests present at the meeting: Mike, Tim and Will**

### **Secretary's Report (Steve)**

Steve made a **motion** that the board **accept the minutes from the March 24, 2024 board meeting** as submitted. Vinney seconded the motion. Motion **passed unanimously** (though Drew had not yet joined the meeting for this vote).

Earlier in April the Finance Committee submitted a proposal via email for dues to be set at \$45 for 2024-2025. After a discussion via email Steve made a **motion** that **Annual Dues for Independence Squares members for the period from June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025 will be \$45**. Ron seconded the motion. The motion **passed unanimously**.

### **Treasurer's Report (Ron submitted a report)**

Ron's report is attached to these minutes. Ron discussed his report.

Steve asked if our total balance at the end of April will be higher than our total balance at the end of March as a result of proceeds from the Fly-In (particularly the baskets and ticket earnings). Ron answered that it would be considerably higher.

After a discussion, Ron made a **motion** that **Independence Squares grant the first year of membership free of charge and give free badges to anyone who graduates from our current Mainstream class**. Dave B seconded the motion. The motion **passed unanimously** (by this time Drew had joined the meeting).

### **Publicity Committee (David B did not submit a written report)**

David B discussed coverage that the club should receive through the community reporter at the Philadelphia Inquirer. David thought the videotaping went well and that the feature on the Independence Squares community will appear on the Philadelphia Inquirer website for which you need a subscription as well as on their Instagram for which you do not need a subscription.

### **Recruitment Committee (Steve did not submit a written report.)**

Steve reported on the open house/recruitment event on Penn's campus on April 14. He discussed the good outcomes of the event (the eight potential new dancers were very enthusiastic, the 20 Independence Squares dancers has a lot of fun, everyone was happy about the easy and free parking) and the concerning aspects (the fact that the dance was on Penn's campus did not induce Penn community members to come to the event). Steve mentioned that 7 of the 8 dancers came because current Independence Squares members, current Mainstream class members and Carol and John brought them.

Dave T brought up trying to promote our club to the attendees of the old time square dance group (not Modern Western Square Dancing) who dance in West Philly. Steve said that Chris D is working on building bridges with the West Philadelphia Square Dancers and that Steve intends to go to one of their dances as well.

Steve also mentioned potential participation in pride events this summer. Steve made a **motion** that the **board grant the Recruitment Committee a \$300 budget for registrations at Pride events through September 2024**. Ron seconded the motion. The motion **passed unanimously**. The money could potentially be used for PhillyPride365 (presuming they give us a satisfactory answer about their mission statement), Delaware County Pride and South Jersey Pride (if the Recruitment Committee decides this is a good idea).

### **Nominating Committee (Scot)**

Chris D is now part of the Nominating Committee.

Vinney will run again for Mainstream and Plus Program Rep.

Peg W will run for Advanced and Challenge Program Rep (and Dave T will step down).

David B will run for Publicity Chair (soon to be renamed Communications Coordinator).

### **Bylaws Committee (David B)**

Vinney asked if we could make a further change regarding the duties of the Mainstream and Plus Program Rep. After some discussion we updated that part of the bylaws proposal to say:

*Shall be responsible for providing resources to the students that guide them to CallerLab definitions for their program.*

This change is reflected in the attached version of the bylaws proposal that will go out to the membership.

Vinney also expressed a concern that the part of the bylaws included below is ambiguous and could be interpreted as meaning that board members are required to stay on the board beyond the annual meeting if no one else runs to fill that spot at the annual meeting. A discussion about why this provision is in the bylaws and what it means ensued. Those present agreed that Vinney had a point but no motion was made to change that part of the bylaws.

#### *4.3 Election and Terms*

*A. Terms will be for one year or until successors are elected, with the exception of the Treasurer and President-Elect who will be elected for 2-year terms.*

### **Caller Liaison Committee (Mike and Linda submitted a report)**

Mike discussed the Committee's report that is attached to these minutes. There is not a lot new from the previous month.

Mike will contact Mark and Betsy to find out if the last day of classes on May 21 will be a graduation celebration all in one room or if the callers will need to finish up their classes in two separate rooms.

### **Fly-In Committee Report (Ron submitted a report)**

Ron discussed the report. He also made a **motion that the Fly-In Committee be given permission to renegotiate our sleeping room contract for 2025 with the Langhorne Sheraton to 140 room nights up from 100.** Dave T seconded the motion and it **passed unanimously.**

Ron reported that the Committee may be coming to the board with a recommendation that we have a total of three dance halls running at the 2025 Fly-In on Friday night and/or Sunday morning as opposed to two dance halls as we did this year.

Ron reported that negotiations with the hotel for Fly-In 2026 are going very well and the hotel is pretty much matching it's offer for 2026 with the contract for 2025.

Ron discussed the problems that we had with the bar. In particular they did not stay open on Friday and Saturday nights as late as had been promised. He listed some strategies for dealing with this problem next year.

### **Mainstream and Plus Program Representative (Vinney)**

Vinney reported that he sent an email to the Mainstream class members that stressed the date of their graduation on May 21. He discussed which class members were likely to graduate and has been coordinating with Betsy to decide who will graduate. Mike pointed out the delicacy needed to deal with the possibility of giving one member of a pair a graduation certificate and denying the other a certificate. Both Mike and Dave T emphasized the advantages of graduating class members who are still not proficient especially if they intend to participate in the Mainstream Workshop in the fall.

Vinney said that he would approach the class member in question to see what her feeling were about that possibility.

### **Advanced and Challenge Program Representative (Dave T)**

Dave reported that he also is in the process of determining which Advanced class members will graduate.

### **Philly Pride Night (Ron)**

31 people are going to Philly Pride. This is enough to get Independence Squares's name on the score board. Ron and Vinney are not able to go this year. Everything is all organized and the participants have been given detailed information.

### **Annual Meeting (Steve and the board)**

Steve shared the announcements that will go out to the membership announcing the Annual Meeting. He received input from board members which he will incorporate into the announcements.

Vinney expressed his concern that we should be recruiting potential board members more aggressively.

Steve made a **motion that all the graduates of the current Mainstream Class be approved for membership by the Board of Directors.** Vinney seconded the motion and the **motion passed unanimously.**

Steve made a **motion** that **Justin be approved for membership by the Board of Directors**. Ron seconded the motion and the **motion passed unanimously**.

Steve mentioned that he would be paying ElectionBuddy \$29 so that we can run the election through that service.

Preparations were made to make a presentation of the Volunteer of the Year Award at the Annual Meeting and to give appropriate gifts to that person (including an Independence Squares mug).

We decided to make Chris D the judge of elections.

### **35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Report (Linda was not present but Mike updated us)**

Linda and Mike need more pictures from recent years. Linda has everything organized including setting up on the afternoon of the event.

### **Wheel Around NJ 2025 (Steve)**

We had a long discussion about Wheel Around NJ 2025 and the possibility of working with the NNJSDA (Northern New Jersey Square Dance Association) who will be running their Mystery Bus Tour in 2025 and approached Times Squares and us jointly about the possibility of ending their tour at our Wheel Around NJ dance. If we do work with NNJSDA then that would require that the dance be in the evening (rather than the afternoon) and in April or May rather than January or February.

The board told Steve to present our concerns to our contacts, Chris Wadel and his partner, who are co-presidents of Belles and Beaus. The board was fine with continued negotiations with them.

Jim Babcock (treasurer of Times Squares) will talk to Chris Wadel soon and Steve will ask Jim to

- report that Independence Squares is tentatively in
- verify that February is not great for them and that May is better
- verify that 6pm to 9pm is acceptable for the time of the dance
- verify that they understand that admission is \$10 per person (not saying we won't negotiate on this).
- verify that everyone on the tour will understand well in advance that they are attending an event hosted by LGBTQ+ clubs where the dress code, etc might not be what they are used to. (They might see same sex kisses for example.)
- verify that they understand that there will be no computer squares or singles list but that everyone who jumps into a square alone will easily find a partner.

### **Old Business**

Mike and Linda have requested more detailed direction about the dances that we would like them to organize. In particular they would like to know the dates and programs for the upcoming dances that we would like them to find callers for. This is a long discussion but the board tried to give some direction for the remaining dances in 2024. The board asked them to try to find a caller for a dance in October that would at least include Mainstream and Plus. If possible there would also be a dance in November for Advanced and Challenge. Mike asked Steve to find out what Saturday nights are available at the church in that time frame and he said that he and Linda would look for callers.

In other old business, Ron reminded the board that Linda had suggested that we formalize the formation of a facilities committee as mandated in the bylaws.

**New Business**

Ron reported that Norma has asked the board to make an announcement on a Tuesday night about making sure dancers do not walk in front Betsy or Mark while they are calling.

**Meeting Adjourned at approximately 9:25pm**

# Independence Squares

## Treasurer's Report

### April 24, 2024

#### Profit and Loss

A fiscal year-to-date Profit and Loss summary is enclosed for review. A summary is below:

- As of March 31, 2024, net income for the year, not including Fly-In income and expenses, is in the red at a net loss of \$2884.51. The breakdown is as follows:
  - Tuesday classes: Loss of \$702.02
  - Special dances: Loss of \$513.15
  - Open houses: Loss of \$110.00
  - General: Loss of \$1559.34

#### 2024 Fly-In

A summary of financial details previously reported to the board is summarized below:

- Our net income, before 50/50 and basket ticket sales is \$1386.82. There are several reasons why we ended up in the black, detailed below.
  - Several committee members purchased items for the Fly-In and treated them as in-kind donations. The in-kind donations reported to us are as follows:
    - Ron: \$111.69, Casey: 45.11, Mary Kay: \$10.64
  - We saved money on printing costs because of the bulk printing job that we did which combined the club's printing needs with those of the Fly-In. This bulk print job is something that we should consider doing again in future years to save money for the Fly-In and the club in general.
  - Income from registration fees was \$1230.00 higher than budgeted.
  - We had sufficient free room nights to cover the callers' rooms.
  - The hotel gave us more free room nights than we had expected, which contributed to our bottom line since Ron and Vinney used the two extra free nights and then reimbursed the club for those costs in the amount of \$299.70. This is a practice that should continue in future years if we have more room nights than what we need to cover the callers' rooms.
- Regarding our PayPal fees, there is a note on the spreadsheet as follows: "Actual is \$154.98 but \$57.10 was charged to previous fiscal year". Our previous treasurer included PayPal fees as part of the club's general expenses instead of allocating them to Fly-In expenses. That means that \$57.10 worth of PayPal fees that were paid during our last fiscal year were not tagged as Fly-In expenses. I note this in order to say that in future years we need to significantly increase our budget for these fees since they were about twice as high as our budgeted amount.
- Our bottom line was further strengthened by strong ticket sales. The 50/50 netted us \$830.00 and the basket sales netted \$3145.00. Our total net income, including ticket sales, was \$5361.82.
- We had 133 dancers in attendance and the hotel reports that we used 128 room nights.

#### Miscellaneous

Dues are due for our next fiscal year and are due by May 31, 2024. The board voted via email to keep the dues at \$45.00. Announcements have begun on Tuesday nights and through the website. As of this report, 18 club members have paid dues for the next fiscal year. The board needs to decide whether or not the new MS class members will be admitted as new club members free of charge for the first year, as has been the case in recent years.

The Finance Committee agreed to move \$15,000 to a one-year CD with an APY of 5.00%. The CD was opened on 4/18/24 with Live Oak Bank.

DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares have each remitted the sum of \$183.33 for their shares of the 2024 Summer Splash expenses.

# Independence Squares Proposed Bylaws Changes for 2024

## Members at Large

Purpose: To drop references to the program books, as they are no longer available, and to eliminate the extra reference to retention, as it's already discussed in section 6

### 4.4 E. Members-at-Large (Program Representatives)

1. To act as ombudsmen for the concerns of their respective programs and to report the outcome of the Board Meetings to their programs on the issues that concern them.
2. Shall be liaisons with the membership of the relevant programs at lessons, dances and other activities.
3. Shall sustain open channels of communication with dancers, teachers and the Board.
4. Shall coordinate the meeting and greeting of dancers at their respective classes and/or workshops.
5. Shall be responsible for maintaining a list of participants in each program for the following purposes:
  - a. ~~Making Dance Booklets available for each class program~~Shall be responsible for providing resources to the students that guide them to CallerLab definitions for their program.-
  - b. Communication between the Caller and the Board of Directors for determination of who will receive a certificate of graduation from each class.
  - c. Ordering club badges.
  - d. ~~Retention purposes.~~
6. Shall be in charge of coordination of retention efforts for dancers.
7. Each of these members at large shall be elected by the entire membership of The Organization.
8. Shall exercise the powers and perform such duties as are usual to this office or as delegated by the President or at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

## Publicity Chair

Purpose: to rename the position and update the description to more accurately depict its responsibilities.

4.2 Composition The Board of Directors shall consist of seven officers of The Organization, all of whom shall be members of The Organization. The Officers of The Organization shall be: President, President-Elect, Secretary, ~~Publicity Chair~~Communications Coordinator, Treasurer, and two Members-at-Large who serve as Program Representatives. One Member-at-Large position will serve as a representative of the Mainstream and Plus dancers and shall be a member of The Organization who is planning to participate primarily in Mainstream and/or Plus classes/workshops or dance events in the upcoming Fiscal Year. The second Member-at-Large position will serve as a representative of the Advanced and Challenge dancers and shall be a member of The Organization who is planning to primarily participate in Advanced and/or Challenge classes/workshops or dance events in the upcoming Fiscal Year. Those elected to the offices of President-Elect and Treasurer shall have been participating in class and/or Organization activities for a



period of no less than two years. In the event that two members wish to share the responsibilities of an elected Office, they may do so as co-Officers on the ballot, but each Office is considered to function as a single voting entity when deciding Board matters.

4.4 F. ~~Publicity Chair~~Communications Coordinator

1. Shall be responsible for all external correspondence for The Organization, including oversight and maintenance of ~~all of~~The Organization's ~~social media accounts~~online presence and email distribution.
2. Shall oversee dissemination of information pertaining to club activities to the wider community.
3. Shall perform other duties as are usual to this office, or as delegated by the President or at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

### Signatures on Checks:

Purpose: to update the language to include electronic authorizations, allowing the board to use electronic forms of payment. Removed “demands for money” and “notes of the Organization” as their definition is unclear.

### 8.3 Signatures

All ~~checks, disbursements of funds and~~, contracts, ~~demands for money, and notes~~ of the Organization, shall be signed or otherwise authorized by two Officers designated by the Board of Directors.

## Caller Liaison Report

### Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – April 25, 2024

The information below is accurate as of Thursday, April 25, 2024, 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.

#### Dances Through April 2026

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place April 2024 through March 2026.

Saturday, June 1, 2024 – IS 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dance – Betsy Gotta Mainstream through C1  
Time 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm The doors will open at 5:30 pm to view the Anniversary display.

Saturday, August 24, 2024 – Summer Splash All-level dance Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Potential Joint Dance with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares

Saturday, December 7, 2024 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge – Merion Friends Meeting House

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

Saturday, December 6, 2025 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Mark Franks – Merion Friends Meeting House

March 2026 Fly-in: Callers: Sandie Bryant, Ted Lizotte, Chris Phillips March 13-15, 2026 TBD

#### Open Houses and Classes

Tuesday, July 23, 2024 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Tuesday, September 10, 2024 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

#### FYI Notes

- 1) Mark Franks will not be available on May 14, 2024. Betsy and Mark cover for each other, so no substitute is required. The Mainstream and Advanced Classes will be the programs called. This suggestion was accepted by the board and is only for classes through May 2024.
- 2) Graduation dance is scheduled for May 21, the last day of the semester as Mark Franks will be out the previous week.
- 3) Discussions were held with the callers and members of the Caller Liaison Committee and then with the board at the last meeting and the following recommendations were made and approved for classes beginning in September 2024.
  - A) Classes would begin on September 24, 2024, two weeks after the last Open House as the callers are unavailable until that date due to existing travel plans.

- B) Betsy would call the Mainstream class and a C1 workshop. There are insufficient numbers of dancers to begin a new C1 class.
- C) Mark would call a Mainstream workshop and an Advanced workshop. The Mainstream workshop would provide the newly graduated Mainstream class an opportunity to hone their skills. The Advanced workshop would provide the newly graduated Advanced dancers to hone their skills as well.
- D) In January 2025, the Mainstream workshop would become a Plus class if there were sufficient interest to do so. If not, the Mainstream workshop would continue.

# **Independence Squares**

## **Fly-In Report**

### **April 24, 2024**

#### **2024 Fly-In**

The 2024 Fly-In netted income of \$5,361.82. A more complete report is included in the April 24, 2024 Treasurer's report. A breakdown of income and expenses has previously been submitted to the board and is enclosed here as well.

#### **2025 Fly-In**

The Fly-In committee recommends to the board that we negotiate with the Langhorne Sheraton to change our 2025 sleeping room commitment from 100 to 140 room nights due to the expectation that our attendance will be considerably higher than it has been in the past two years. With an attrition rate of 80%, that would obligate the club to 112 room nights. For reference, we sold 145 room nights in 2023 and 128 room nights in 2024. This increase is recommended due to the hotel's reluctance in 2024 to add more rooms to our block as we sold out. They did add rooms each time we asked for more but commented that they are not supposed to do so. The committee's fear is that there might come a point where the hotel refuses to add more rooms to our block thereby resulting in some dancers not being able to get discounted rooms, or any room at all.

We are also planning to negotiate a revised contract with the hotel for 2025 which would give us more dance space due to the expected higher attendance. We understand that this will increase our costs and no contract will be approved until the Fly-In committee and board each have a chance to consider any proposal that we receive.

As of 4/23/24 we have 66 registrations for the 2025 Fly-In, with registration fees of \$6250.00.

#### **2026 Fly-In**

Negotiations with the Langhorne Sheraton have begun for the 2026 Fly-In. Unofficially, the hotel has agreed to keep our contract the same as that which we have for 2025, with just a slight increase in the sleeping room rate.