

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
October 16, 2024, 7:00 PM**

Board Members in Attendance: David B., Marika, Peg, Ron, Steve, Sarah, Vinney

Board Members Absent: None

Guests: Scot, Will

Secretary's Report - Sarah

David B. made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 21st Board Meeting. Sarah seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Ron

Ron's written report is attached to these minutes. The club is up to date on deposits for the Sheraton Hotel for the 2025 and 2026 Fly-Ins. Many dancers pre-paid for the first set of classes. Ron went to PNC and verified that the signature card is correct. Ron said he'd like to gather email addresses for all dancers in one place for ease of communication.

Rate increase by church – Steve

The club received a notice from the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion saying that they will be raising our rent. They will inform us what the rate increase will be on or before November 1st.

Finance Committee Report – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. The Finance Committee drafted an application for financial assistance, a notice of approval, and a notice of denial, which Ron presented to the Board. There was a discussion about what should be considered evidence of a financial hardship.

The Finance Committee recommended that the club establish a caller school scholarship program which would pay for the GCA school and part of the hotel costs. The phrase "one and one-half of the cost of the hotel nights" was changed to "one and a half hotel nights." The availability of the scholarship, and what it covers, will be reassessed annually.

Ron made a motion that we accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee with the change of wording. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a discussion about the proposal to subsidize CallerLab fees for potential new callers. The cost would be \$108 for the BMI/ASCAP licensing fee. The phrase "not club callers" was changed to "not currently professional callers."

Ron made a motion to accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee with the change of wording. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Marika made a motion to approve the recommended application, acceptance form, and denial form with an added sentence to the effect of “you may reach out to the Finance Committee to discuss this decision further” on the denial form. David B. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a discussion about whether to put the application form on the website.

Marika made a motion to include the application form on the website with a note that the form can be submitted to the Finance Committee and a link to email the Finance Committee Google group. Steve seconded. Passed unanimously.

Ron and David B. will provide Marika with the necessary materials to post on the website.

Caller Liaison Report – Mike/Linda

There was no Caller Liaison report. Steve made a proposal that we change the time of the January 4th, 2025 dance from 7:00-10:00 PM to 7:00-9:30 PM.

David B. made a motion to change the end of the January 4th dance from 10:00 PM to 9:30 PM. Steve seconded. The motion passed.

On March 4th, 2025 approximately 13 regularly attending dancers will be out of town for the square dance cruise. David B. questioned whether this would cause a problem for making up squares on that day.

On April 15, 2025, both Mark and Betsy will be absent. Peg will ask Linda to check if a potential substitute caller who would benefit from the CallerLab subsidy would be available on that day.

Communications Report – Marika

The written report is attached to this report. Marika reported that we are getting a lot of views on Instagram. A post advertising our lessons was seen by over 1500 people. Marika asked for people to send them more photos of Tuesday nights to post on social media. There was a discussion about who should make flyers for the upcoming events after the Glitter Ball.

MS/Plus Report – Vinney

There are eight new dancers. Vinney has been sending out weekly emails to everyone in the Mainstream class with the calls learned that week. He has also been in contact with some dancers who previously danced with us but cannot come back this year. Steve asked if he would

email Eric, Zach, and Gabe to encourage them to come to the Halloween Dance on October 19. Marika will send Vinney some links to share with the Mainstream class.

Advanced/Challenge Report – Peg

Peg is planning to send out emails with the list of upcoming calls to be taught for Advanced and Challenge. She has spoken to some Advanced/Challenge dancers who want to come back in November.

New Business

Peg announced the winner and runner-up tee shirt designs. She is looking into printing companies and will get back to the Board with pricing. We will discuss subsidizing when we have a better idea of the cost.

David B. asked about making a new club directory. Steve suggested asking Mike if he will do it, as he compiled the directory in the past.

Steve made an extra set of keys to the church and gave them to Ron. Steve is also planning to make a new set of keys to open the storage area. The Board or the Facilities Committee needs to find a new person to open the door in January and February.

Ron will put out feelers for a new Treasurer. He will make the first announcement during the next Tuesday night.

The next Board meeting will be on November 13, 2024 at 7:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Paulos
Secretary, Independence Squares

Independence Squares Treasurer's Report October 16, 2024

Attached is the September month-end financial summary.

Items of note, previously reported to the board in my email of 10/2/2024:

- The balance in our PNC checking account is higher than normal since we have two payments due soon to the Sheraton for our 2025 and 2026 events. Update: Those payments have been made.
- Misc expenses increased by \$172.69. This was our annual Zoom fee.
- Dance admissions increased dramatically since many dancers prepaid for our first set of classes. This will eventually be reduced by the cost of our callers and our hall rental fees.
- Because our Fly-In income and expenses are carried as accrual items, they appear on our balance sheet, not our profit and loss statement. You'll find the income under "Other Current Liabilities-Prepaid Fly-In Admissions". You'll find the expenses under "Other Assets-Prepaid Fly-In Expenses". Although not mandated to do so, I am also carrying Glitter Ball expenses on the balance sheet since this was paid in the last fiscal year but relates to the Glitter Ball for this fiscal year. You'll find that under "Prepaid Dance Expenses-Prepaid Glitter Ball Expenses".

Other items of interest are as follows:

- It was noted in last month's report that Chris Shull renewed his Independence Squares membership on 9/6/24, thereby increasing our membership to 66 and that I would be remitting the required insurance premium to the USDA for Chris' insurance coverage. Steve has since advised me that Chris is covered through Busy B's. That means that we are not required to pay an insurance premium for him. I do still need to add him to the USDA roster for our club and will do that soon.
- It was also noted in last month's report that I must remit a list of our new class members to the USDA for insurance coverage and that I would do it after the 3rd week of classes. Since we had new class members attend the 3rd week, I am waiting just one more week and will send the list to the USDA around October 16.
- I also noted previously that the change in signers for our PNC account has been completed and that I would be following up to ensure that PNC files the paperwork properly. I have visited PNC Bank and was able to physically view the updated signature card. It has been completed and filed correctly.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron R

Independence Squares Finance Committee Report

October 16, 2024

A Finance Committee meeting was held on Saturday, September 28, 2024. Topics of discussion and related recommendations are as follows.

Guidelines for providing financial assistance

The committee discussed the need for consistency when considering financial assistance to club members who apply for our discounted dance admission fee program. There is also a need to prevent abuse of the program. It was agreed to amend the financial assistance application to include wording that would help to achieve these goals. We also agreed to not require any detailed financial information from applicants. The approved amended application is enclosed with this report. Ron was tasked with drafting wording to be used to notify an applicant of approval, and that wording is at the bottom of this report. The committee jointly drafted wording for denied applications and that wording is also at the bottom of this report.

Confidentiality of financial assistance

The committee discussed the need to keep the names of those approved for discounted dance fees confidential. When collecting entrance fees, the sign-in sheet is to reflect an "x" only, instead of the current practice of recording the amount paid. PayPal will be offered as a solution for those who are approved for a discounted dance fee and who want to keep that information confidential, thereby eliminating the possibility of another dancer observing the fact that the dancer is paying a lesser amount than the standard rate. Approved applicants will be informed of this option. Confidentiality could be a problem if the person collecting the entrance fees is not a member of the Finance Committee. It was agreed that in this situation, any person who is deputized to collect dance fees must be advised of the need for confidentiality and can be trusted to maintain the confidentiality of approved individuals. If anyone has a concern regarding those members who are receiving financial assistance, they will be advised to bring those concerns to a member of the Finance Committee in writing and to not discuss their concerns with individuals who are not part of the Finance Committee.

Caller school scholarships

It was noted that the board previously voted to provide scholarships to an IAGSDC caller school, held before each convention, to help build a pipeline of future club callers. The Finance Committee was tasked with ironing out the details of this program.

Recommendation #1: The Finance Committee recommends that Independence Squares establish a scholarship for the upcoming San Francisco convention that will pay the cost of the GCA school itself, plus one and one-half of the cost of the hotel nights (including tax and service charges) required to attend the school. Up to two individuals can be ap-

proved this year. An application shall be required, with a note indicating that scholarships may be available to active members of Independence Squares and with the requirement that the applicant provide a statement regarding how their participation will benefit the club. Availability of scholarships will be reassessed for future conventions. Applications are to be approved by the board, not the Finance Committee and the program is to be publicized by the board.

Rationale: The maintenance of our dance program requires that we have a pipeline of club callers for the future. Offering assistance for club members who might want to become callers will help to fill this pipeline.

Callerlab subsidies

Recommendation #2: The Finance Committee recommends that the club pay the BMI/ASCAP licensing fee portion of the Callerlab fees for those club members/callers who are not club callers but who will be available to fill in when any of our club callers becomes unavailable. Recipients of this financial assistance will be required to sign a contract with Independence Squares to fill in for us on specified Tuesday nights when any of our currently contracted callers are unavailable. These callers will be paid the standard rate.

Rationale: Anyone who calls for our club is required to be licensed to play copyrighted music. This is typically done through a Callerlab membership. Club members who are not professional callers, but who are able to fill in when needed, would need to be so licensed. In most cases, these individuals are not likely to be members of Callerlab. By helping them to join Callerlab, with our club paying for part of the associated fees, these people have a financial incentive to become licensed which then allows our club to hire them to fill in when needed. Without this financial incentive, individuals may decide that the cost of joining Callerlab isn't justified.

Providing opportunities for up-and-coming callers to practice

The committee recognized that pursuant to our GCA scholarship program, it is necessary for our future callers to get the practice that they need. It was agreed that this is not a topic for the Finance Committee to pursue and that further discussion is needed by the board.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron R

Wording for financial assistance approval

Approval verbiage:

The Independence Squares Finance Committee is happy to advise you that your application for financial assistance has been approved. Effective with the date that we received your application, your dance fee for our events has been reduced to \$5.00. In the case of a day-long event, with both an afternoon and an evening session, your dance fee shall be \$5.00 per session. This does not apply to the Independence Squares Fly-In. This approval expires at the end of the current fiscal year, which is May 31. Upon expiration, you are welcome to reapply for the next fiscal year if necessary.

Independence Squares respects your privacy and is committed to keeping this information confidential. Your application and approval for this program is known only by the members of the Finance Committee who are tasked with keeping this information confidential. Please note that when paying dance fees to the person who is collecting entrance fees at the door, you might inadvertently expose the fact that you are paying less than the standard rate. We therefore recommend that you consider using PayPal as a payment option so that no other dancer observes the amount that you are paying, and that you refrain from discussing this discount with other dancers.

Denial verbiage:

The Finance Committee has reviewed your application. Based on the information you provided, we did not see a financial hardship. You are welcome to reapply with additional information.

Communications Coordinator Report

October 16, 2024

Updates:

- Dave Blatt and I met on Saturday September 21st to complete website training. I am now fully trained on maintaining the Independence Squares website.
- I was added as an authorized user to manage the upcoming fly-in listings on the IAGDSC website. I updated the listing for the 2026 fly-in to include the callers and venue.
- Instagram:
As of October 15th we have 408 followers on Instagram. This is a 33% increase since the start of July (307). 53% of our followers live in Philadelphia and 45% of them are between the ages of 25 and 34. 23% are between 35 and 44 years old. 74% are women.

From July 3rd to October 1st, posts on our account got a total of 7,104 views by 683 accounts (accounts who saw multiple posts were counted multiple times). The most viewed posts were about upcoming lessons, open houses, and photos from open houses and the Summer Splash.

Our "Learn to Square Dance" post was viewed over 1,500 times and 72% of those views were from people who don't already follow us. This is partly because the post was shared by two large accounts, the Philly Dyke Calendar and Sip City Mixer, which spotlight LGBTQ events in Philly. 59 people interacted with the post by liking it, sharing it, or saving it. Our other top posts got 200-260 views, mostly by people who follow us.

Upcoming:

- Email will be sent this week reminding dancers about the Saturday Halloween dance. Let me know if there are any items you would like included in that email.
- **Please take photos on Tuesday night dances and send them to me at marikabarth@hotmail.com for use on Instagram!**

Ongoing:

- Please send any photos you take at Independence Squares events to me at marikabarth@hotmail.com for use on social media!
- Please consider submitting info for a Square Dancer Snapshot on Instagram. You can do so [here](#) or email me a photo and some fun facts about yourself. I will run the finished "snapshot" by you prior to posting. Thank you George Voorhis, Leda, Roy, and Arin for sharing info for snapshots already!