

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
December 11th, 2024, 7:00 PM**

Board Members in Attendance: Dave, Marika, Peg, Ron, Vinney, Sarah, Steve

Board Members Absent: None

Guests in Attendance: Linda, Mike, Tim, Will

Secretary's Report – Sarah

Ron made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 13th meeting. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Glitter Ball Recap – Dave

Dave thanked Steve, Ron and Vinney in particular for their work at the Glitter Ball. He was happy about the number of new students who attended and Dayle's calling. Other Board members agreed that Dayle did good job.

Treasurer's Report – Ron

Ron's written report is attached to these minutes. He gave an overview of his report verbally. He noted that he removed the column titled "2025 Fly-In" from the cumulated report as that information is already detailed on the balance sheet. He gave a summary of the profit and loss from the Glitter Ball. The net income will be \$282, assuming that the club gets the security deposit back from the venue. Note: The deposit was returned on December 13th after the Board meeting. Mike asked for confirmation that the bank balance has dropped in the latter part of the year because of Fly-In expenses the club has pre-paid, and Ron said that was correct, and that we have prepaid deposits for both 2025 and 2026.

In response to a letter from All Join Hands, Ron asked if it was appropriate for the club to make a donation, stating that he didn't remember the club ever donating in the past. As a member of the All Join Hands Board, Mike clarified that it was a general letter that was sent to everyone who previously donated, and there was no need for the club to respond. Dave asked Mike if he would speak to the club about All Join Hands at the next announcement time to explain what they do, and Mike agreed.

Fly-In Committee Report – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. There are currently 106 registered dancers and 77 room nights booked. The dance schedule is almost ready to be publicized. We had one registration donated and one IAGSDC Convention registration donated, which we might make a

basket prize. The committee has decided on the callers for the 2027 Fly-In and has asked the Caller Liaison to reach out to them. Ron also reached out to the Sheraton about 2027.

Ron recommended that we combine print jobs for the Fly-In and other dances and submit them in a bundle to an online printer. Last year the club was able to save money by putting in a big order this way. Marika offered to take the lead on making posters or coordinating with others who will make posters. Ron will send Marika a list of flyers that need to be made. The order will go out in March.

Ron made a motion that we once again use an online printer to print the Fly-In documents and other documents. Dave seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Facilities – Steve

The Board previously voted to approve the new contract with the Lutheran Church with the clause about increasing the rent again next year removed. Steve wrote to Chris at the church, and the church has yet to respond to our request to amend the contract. The Board agreed that Steve should send back the contract with the clause crossed out.

Ron noted that there currently is no contract with the venue for the 2025 Glitter Ball. Steve said he would follow up. However, he said we do have a verbal agreement with them and a date.

Finance Committee Report – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. There was a request from a member for transparency regarding the lost potential income from the financial assistance program. The committee agreed this was reasonable. Going forward, the cost will be reported as a line item in the monthly financial reports. The committee decided not to report other lost income such as free admission for spouses and discounts for early registry to the Fly-In.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends that the Treasurer report the impact of the “Financial Assistance Accommodation” program through the addition of a line-item on the monthly financial reports and that this practice continue through the end of the current fiscal year. The reported figures will represent the difference between the stated door rate for member dancers vs the actual rate paid by the members who are approved for this program.

Rationale: Providing this information through the financial reports creates transparency regarding the cost of the “Financial Assistance Accommodation” program and will allow the board to evaluate the efficacy of the program.

Ron asked for comments and questions. Tim argued that the program could violate the requirement that a nonprofit not provide financial benefits for members and suggested this should be an agenda item for January. There were no comments about the transparency.

Ron made a motion that the Board accept the Finance Committee's recommendation. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Caller Liaison Report – Mike/Linda

The written report is attached to these minutes. January 7th, when Betsy will be absent, will be Mainstream and Mainstream/Plus only. There was a discussion about whether the Plus class should start in January. There were concerns about how to balance the interests of the various programs next year. It is undecided what classes and workshops will be held next year. Mike and Vinney both spoke to the recently graduated Mainstream class about the Plus class. Peg said that at least eight Advanced dancers are willing to angel Plus.

David B. made a motion to start Plus on January 14th. Vinney seconded. The motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.

There was a discussion about whether to open the February 15th dance to class-level Mainstream. No flyers have been printed yet.

David B. made a motion to make the February 15th class-level Mainstream and full Plus. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Caller Liaison Committee will talk to Kent and Marika will change the details on the website.

Wheel Around NJ – Steve

Steve is in the process of working on the contract and joint dance agreement. He said he would get the joint dance agreement done by the end of December.

Steve thought the breaks between tips at the last Halloween dance were too long. Linda suggested giving the caller a schedule of how many tips to call instead of asking him to change his style.

Marika made a motion to offer SSD instead of Mainstream at the April 19th dance. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Summer Splash – Steve

Steve summarized the conversation about hiring Cameron up to this point. At the last Board meeting, Mike and Linda expressed serious concerns about hiring Cameron, as they believed Dayle would prefer to work the Summer Splash alone. The Board decided to ask Mark H. to speak to Dayle about it again. Steve wrote a letter to Mark H., which David B. edited, and Mark H. sent a response. It appears that Mark H. did not talk to Dayle a second time and did not address our concerns. Linda believed that the Board did not adequately communicate with the

Caller Liaison Committee. Mike agreed to have another discussion with Dayle, asking him for his official position. Mike believed that if Dayle was strongly opposed, Independence Squares should tell Chesapeake that we do not wish to hire Cameron. Multiple Board members agreed. If we do agree to hire Cameron as co-caller, Dayle will still be paid the full amount he would normally be paid.

David B. made a motion for the Caller Liaison Committee to get Dayle's opinion on the record and report back to the Board. Ron seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Communications Report – Marika

Marika did not give a verbal report due to lack of time. The written report is attached to these minutes.

Tee Shirts – Marika

Marika provided a list of tee shirt orders. Ron will take over logistics of ordering the tee shirts, getting them delivered, and receiving money for tee shirts.

The next Board Meetings will be on January 22nd, February 20th, March 26th, April 23rd, and May 28th.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Paulos
Secretary, Independence Squares

Independence Squares Treasurer's Report December 11, 2024

Attached is the November month-end financial summary.

Items of note, previously reported to the board via email on 12/3/2024:

- Our "Insurance" expense increased by \$413.00 due to the annual premium that we paid to the USDA. We have 66 club members, but 7 of them are covered for insurance by other clubs. The annual premium of \$7.00 per member resulted in a cost of \$413.00.
- I have removed the column titled "2025 Fly-In" from the cumulated report, since 2025 Fly-In related income and expenses are detailed on the balance sheet. The "2024 Fly-In" column remains on this report because the 2024 Fly-In income and expenses, currently detailed on the balance sheet, will eventually move to the Profit & Loss statement at the conclusion of the 2024 event. Therefore, this column will need to remain on the P&L summary.

Glitter Ball finances [Note: These figures will be included in the month-end reconciliation for December but are reported here because they are likely to be of interest to the board at this time.]

- We had 65 dancers at this year's Glitter Ball. The winner of the 50/50 donated \$200 of their winnings back to the club and kept \$20 for themselves. The financial breakdown is as follows:
 - Door income: \$635.00
 - 50/50 income: \$220.00
 - 50/50 proceeds donated back to the club: \$200.00
 - Total income: \$1055.00

 - Hall rental: \$375.00
 - Caller fee: \$350.00
 - Custodian fee: \$35.00
 - Flyer printing: \$12.21
 - PayPal fees: \$0.64
 - Total expenses: \$772.85

 - Net income: \$282.15

Outstanding still is our \$150.00 security deposit. I expect this to be fully refunded to us. If not, then our net income will be adjusted.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron R

Fly-In Committee Committee Report

December 11, 2024

The Fly-In Committee held a meeting on December 4, 2024. The minutes are below

Attendees: Peg, Ron, Marika, Arin, Pattie, Linda, Mary Kay, Bob, Vinney, Steve

Numbers update

- 106 registered dancers. Increase of 4 from last meeting
- \$9645.00 registration dollars
- Hotel room count: 77 (this is lower than reported at the last meeting, due to a reporting issue with the hotel)

Decorations

- Joyce Heron, from Delaware, is loaning 50's-style decorations to us. Vinney and Pattie will get together to pick them up. Pictures of some of the donated items were shared with the committee.

Caller updates

- Don Moger update: Mary Kay noted that she's heard that he is doing much better. Still has back issues. Mike also reported that he's heard that Don is doing ok. Backup plan not yet in place but can consider Betsy and Mark.
- Sandie Bryant hasn't returned her contract for 2026 yet. Mike is still following up.

Dance schedule

- Callers' comments and those from others have been incorporated into the revised schedule.
- High C will be C3A (2 hours). We will mention privately to callers that if there aren't 8 dancers that show up, they should call to the highest level in the room. We have 7 C3A dancers registered and expect to have more register.
- It was decided to have two half-hour breaks across all halls at the same time. These will be filled by guest callers
- Guest callers
 - Kent Forrester (SSD through C2), Blaine Knupp (Plus only), Karen Rabe (SSD or Plus), and Greg Moore (SSD or Plus) have all offered.
 - Mark Franks and Betsy Gotta will be asked if they will each do one half-hour slot. That will give us the 6 guest callers that we need. The caller liaisons will reach out to Mark and Betsy.
 - It was agreed that none of the guest callers will receive pay for their calling slots.
 - Subsequent to the meeting, Ron realized that Karen and Greg might not be able to call at the same time in separate halls, since they are a married couple and might have just one laptop to work from. Ron will reach out to them and will report back to the committee.
 - Guest caller slots will say "TBA" and we will fill later. If we end up not filling slots, the hall can be shut down for that half hour
- Lunch break was increased, and dinner break was reduced by a half-hour each.
- Marika will give the revised schedule to Linda and Mike to pass to callers for their comments. It will then be posted online as a "tentative" schedule and will be sent out by the Registrar to the attendees. Marika will make graphic for Facebook to highlight the number of hours that we have for challenge dancing, in order to entice more to come.
- Kaleidoscope Saturday night? Vic can do it. Vic needs to be asked how long it will take and how many dancers are needed. We don't need to determine this until Jan/Feb. Linda will ask Vic about that.
- Workshops. Steve recommended that we let the callers do workshops where/when they feel appropriate. Also let Vic do progressive squares if the opportunity presents itself. Let callers know that they are welcome to add fun things. Linda will discuss it with Mike.

Day Rates

- We kept the walk-in rates the same as 2024's rates, as follows:

- Friday night only: \$35.00
- Saturday full day: \$80.00
- Saturday morning/afternoon: \$45.00
- Saturday night: \$35.00
- Sunday: \$35.00
- The full weekend walk-in rate, as stated on the flyer, is \$130.00
- Approval was also obtained to set the rate for new Mainstreamers as \$25, per session, which is the same rate that we had in 2024.
- First time attendee, as stated on our flyer: \$95.00 for full weekend

Advertising

- Arin and Marika have started social media postings.
- All Join Hands mailing: Ron will take care of for the January mailing
- Federation ad is in the works
- “What is a Fly In?” document. Has been completed. Purpose: for new MS class. Vinney to send out but not until the FAQ section and new attendee guides are posted on our website. Ron will coordinate with Marika and Arin.
- FAQ section is ready to post.
- New Dancer Guide. Ron will print and we’ll give them to the new dancers and will have a few extras in case anyone else asks for one. Share with class coordinators at our sister clubs? Mary Kay and Bob will check with NY and DC and Chesapeake.

Registrar outreach

Next mass mailing to registered dancers will go out in January. Include the dance program, link to FAQ’s, hotel reservation reminder, reminder concerning costumes and prizes, picture of some of the decorations (especially the jukebox), baskets (request to donate baskets and bring money to pay for them), 50/50 money. Ron will check the wording of last year’s email to see if anything else needs to be included.

Email to club for help at the 2025 event

We’ll wait until the new year to discuss further

Mary Kay’s Rough Timeline document

The only item to work on right now is to solicit concierges for the callers. Next couple of Tuesdays announce this and ask for volunteers. Linda will formalize this with a listing of what the concierge needs to do.

Roles for the Fly In

Pattie long ago mentioned the need to document what each person on the committee needs to do to fulfill their specific roles. Mary Kay started a draft of this document back in February and we haven’t followed up on it. Ron will send the document to those responsible (registrar, basket chair, treasurer, etc.) for their review and input. Rest of the items to be reviewed by the committee. Maybe formalize at next meeting if we have time.

Control of Google Group

As discussed at our last meeting, Casey has control over the Fly-In Committee Google Group. Needs to be changed to the club. Ron reached out to Casey but no action has been taken yet. Ron will follow up with Casey.

Donated registrations

We have two registrations that have been donated to the club for use by dancers for whom the cost might be prohibitive. We’ll announce this at club nights. If more than two dancers ask for them, we’ll have a drawing. Set deadline for people to request it.

[Note: After the meeting, Ron became aware of the fact that we currently have only one Fly-In donated registration, not two. We do have a second donated registration but that is for the IAGSDC Convention. We will add this item to the agenda for our next meeting, to discuss as a possible basket raffle]

Kellie's interest

It was mentioned at the last meeting that Kellie has expressed an interest in helping with the Fly-In. Marika spoke with her. Kellie is potentially interested but isn't available on Wednesday evenings. We will work to schedule our next meeting so that Kellie can attend, if still interested.

Need for new co-chair

Some time ago, Ron privately mentioned to Mary Kay that he was interested in stepping down as a co-chair, after the 2025 Fly-In. He is reconsidering this decision, and is leaning toward staying on as co-chair, since he is working to retire from many other responsibilities that he has in the square and round dance world. This discussion was tabled in order for Ron to finalize a decision. Peg mentioned that she would be interested in discussing the possibility of taking over the Registrar role from Ron. They will discuss this further.

Messages at 2025 Fly-In

Ron will reach out to Gabe to see if they are interested in providing this service as they did at our 2024 event

2027 Fly-In

- Callers discussed included Michael Levy, Dayle Hodge, Barry Clasper, Eric Henerlau, Tom Miller, Kris Jensen, Betsy Gotta, Mark Franks, Justin Russell, and Ett McAtee. Callers selected as our first choice for 2027 are Eric Henerlau, Mark Franks, and Barry Clasper. Alternates are Dayle Hodge for Barry Clasper, Ett McAtee for Mark Franks, and Mike Levy for Eric Henerlau. Linda will discuss with Mike and unless they have concerns, will reach out to our first choices to confirm the levels that they call and to ask about availability. Dates are April 2-4, 2027.
- Ron will begin discussions with the Sheraton to ask about availability and pricing for 2027. A concern was raised about the status of the Sheraton in terms of the sale of the property and the renovations that were planned. Ron will inquire about these with the hotel.

2026 theme

We opened the initial discussion about this. Suggested themes were Wicked (based on the Broadway musical and subsequent films), "Spin the Big Top"/"The Greatest Showman" circus theme. Wizard Of Oz. The committee was asked to give more thought to this for our next meeting.

T-Shirts

Marika asked about a possible interest in having T-shirts for our 2025 event and beyond, using the company that Linda and Peg obtained for the new club shirts. Marika offered to put together a graphic for us to consider for the 2025 Fly-In and we will consider this at the next meeting.

Next meeting

Scheduled for Friday, January 17, 2025. Ron will set up the Zoom link and send out the invitations. Ron will also individually reach out to Kellie, Casey, and Eileen to let them know, since all three of them have been unable to attend meetings because of scheduling conflicts in the past.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron, Fly-In Committee Co-Chair

Independence Squares Finance Committee Report

December 11, 2024

A Finance Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. In attendance were Dave B, Peg W, Steve D, and Ron R. One topic was discussed, as outlined below.

Transparency of the impact of the financial assistance program

The board received a request from a club member to report “the dollar amount of the funds awarded each month...as part of the financial statements”. This request refers to the discount provided through the financial assistance program that allows for a reduced dance fee for approved club members, a program that has previously been approved by the board. In response to this club member’s request, a board member asked whether we should be reporting other forms of lost income. Specifically mentioned were club prepayments for Tuesday classes and caller spouses who do not pay to dance. The committee also noted that other forms of lost income include free dance admissions granted as prizes, free Fly-In certificates given to IAGSDC clubs for their basket raffles, and discounts granted to those who register early for our Fly-Ins (so called “early bird rates”). It was agreed that the financial assistance program is a new program whereas the other discounts are long standing programs that the board has agreed offer positive benefit to the club, and that further evaluation of those programs is not necessary, whereas an evaluation of the benefit of the financial assistance program should be made. The committee agreed to the practice of providing this information as requested through the rest of the current fiscal year for this purpose. The means of providing this information were discussed, including the possible use of a contra account vs a simple line-item in the monthly financial reports, with the line-item method being approved by the committee. If the board agrees to continue the financial assistance program after the current fiscal year, it may no longer be necessary to continue tracking the program’s cost, but the next board will make that decision. It was proposed that the wording of this program, as noted on the financial report, be “Financial Assistance Accommodation”. A sample of the proposed change to the financial report is attached, with the new line-item highlighted in yellow, just for this sample. The figures listed represent the cost difference between the stated door rate for member dancers vs the actual rate paid by the members who are approved for this program.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommends that the Treasurer report the impact of the “Financial Assistance Accommodation” program through the addition of a line-item on the monthly financial reports and that this practice continue through the end of the current fiscal year. The reported figures will represent the difference between the stated door rate for member dancers vs the actual rate paid by the members who are approved for this program.

Rationale: Providing this information through the financial reports creates transparency regarding the cost of the “Financial Assistance Accommodation” program and will allow the board to evaluate the efficacy the program.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron R, Finance Committee member

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – December 11, 2024

The information below is accurate as of Sunday, December 8, 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, January 4, 2025 – Advanced and C1 Mark Franks 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, February 15, 2025 – Mainstream and Plus Kent Forrester 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, March 15, 2025 – Advanced and C1 Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

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

Saturday, April 19, 2025 – 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm Mainstream and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 Dayle Hodge

Saturday, May 31, 2025 – Mainstream and Plus with Advanced Star Tip Wheel Around NJ II Dan Koft 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm People Care Center, Bridgewater, NJ Joint dance with Times Squares

Saturday, June 7, 2025 – Mainstream and Plus Pride Dance Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, August 23, 2025 – Summer Splash All-level dance Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Joint Dance with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares

Saturday, October 11, 2025 - 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm Mainstream and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 John Hawley

Saturday, December 6, 2025 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Mark Franks – Merion Friends Meeting House 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm

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

Open Houses and Classes

What is happening with this? This was based on the last I heard. Tuesday, January 7, 2025 – Mark Franks will replace the Mainstream Workshop with a Plus Class

FYI Notes

- 1) Discussions were held with the callers and members of the Caller Liaison Committee and then with the board at a previous meeting and the following recommendations were made and approved for classes beginning in September 2024.
 - A) Betsy will call the Mainstream class and a C1 workshop. There are insufficient numbers of dancers to begin a new C1 class.
 - B) Mark will call a Mainstream workshop and an Advanced workshop. The Mainstream workshop will provide the newly graduated Mainstream class members an opportunity to hone their skills. The Advanced workshop will provide the newly graduated Advanced dancers an opportunity to hone their skills as well.
 - C) **????What is the latest decision on this?!** In January 2025, the Mainstream workshop will become a Plus class. Discussions were held with Mark Franks and there is a sufficient number of students, both new and returning, to hold a Plus Class. The students will not be ready with Plus for the fly-in but will have completed the class by the end of the term in May 2025. The Mainstream workshop will not continue. Vinney Finlay has agreed to talk with the students who are not ready to continue on to Plus and encourage them to continue on in the current Mainstream Class to strengthen their skills.
- 2) Saturday, August 2025 Summer Splash – Details to be worked out by which club? Dayle has been hired as the caller, so the only remaining detail to be worked out is confirmation of the space. My memory is a bit foggy here, but has this already been worked out?
- 3) Similar to last year, after some feedback, we are recommending not hiring another caller on nights when only one of the callers is out that evening. The programs to be called those nights had been the Mainstream class and the Advanced workshop, however, with the beginning of the Plus class in January 2025, the Mainstream and Plus classes should be called on those nights when only one caller is available.
- 4) As of this writing, Mark Franks will be out on October 15, 2024 and April 15, 2025. Betsy Gotta will be out on January 7, 2025 and April 15, 2025. Please note that they will both be out on April 15, 2025 as they will be attending CallerLab. The board should consider going dark that night unless a reasonable substitute can be found.

Communications Coordinator Report

Upcoming:

- An email will be sent next week reminding dancers that there is no dancing scheduled on Tuesday, December 24th or Tuesday, December 31st.
- An email will be sent later this month reminding dancers about the Advanced/Challenge dance on Saturday, January 4th
- I will be adding the fly-in FAQ to the website and begin distributing the new attendees's guide.
- Arin Barth will be providing tips for photographing square dancing on Tuesday, December 17th during announcements
- I am putting together a Canva 101 training to be tentatively offered around January/February

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!