

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
January 22, 2024, 7:00 PM**

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

Board Members Absent: None

Guests in Attendance: Arin, Deb, Mike, Tim

Secretary's Report – Sarah

Ron made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 11th meeting. Sarah seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. The cumulative report this month does not reflect the money we received from dancers for tee shirts, which will be on next month's record. Twenty-seven tee shirts have not been picked up and paid for by dancers yet. Reimbursement for tee shirts will result in a net income of around \$60 for the club.

Ron made a motion for the club to pay for the cost of the baby onesie as a gift to Maren and Zach. Marika seconded. The motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.

One of the club's certificates of deposit (CDs) is coming to maturity and Ron intends to convert the money to cash to cover Fly-In costs. David B. asked about possible ways for the club to avoid PayPal transaction fees. Ron said he planned to research how to reduce service charges.

Finance Committee Report - Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. As instructed by the Board, the Finance Committee drafted an application for the GCA caller school scholarship for the Board's approval. The application is only for this year; the next Board will decide if the program should be renewed next year. Up to two applicants will be approved for the scholarship. Mike asked how the Board would decide who to award the scholarship to if there are more than two applicants. No formal decision has been made about this, but the Board will discuss and decide which application is most compelling. Marika suggested adding a deadline to the application. The Board will discuss the applications after the deadline has passed.

Ron made a motion for the Board to accept the application with an amendment to add a deadline of May 1st and information on who to submit the application to. Vinney seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board will publicize the GCA caller school scholarship and the plan to subsidize ASCAP/BMI licensing fees for any club members who are not currently working callers but would be able to fill in when our regular callers are not available. Marika will draft an email advertising both programs and post the information on the club website.

50/50 Raffle

Steve felt the Board should have a policy regarding whether there should be a 50/50 raffle at every dance. Multiple Board members felt it was a good idea to have a 50/50 at every dance. Next Tuesday during the announcements, David B. will ask for volunteers to run the 50/50 at the next dance. During a dance, the person taking money at the door will have the power to deputize volunteers for this task.

Caller Liaison Report – Mike

The written report is attached to these minutes. Mike issued the following corrections: the report should say that the April dance will be SSD and February dance will be class-level Mainstream. The Board and Mike discussed the schedule for dances in 2026. The following schedule was agreed upon, subject to change:

January 3rd	A2 and C1 2111 Sansom	7 to 9:30 Advanced and Challenge
February 14th/21st?	Valentines Day Dance 2111 Sansom	7 to 9:30 Class Level MS and Plus
March 13th-15 th Sunday	Philadelphia Freedom Fly-In Sandy Bryant, Ted Lizotte, Chris Phillips Sheraton Bucks County	7pm Friday to 1pm
March 28th	A2 and C1 2111 Sansom	7 to 9:30 Advanced and Challenge
April 18th and Plus	Double Header 2111 Sansom	3 to 5:30 SSD 7 to 9:30 A2 and C1
May 16th?	Wheel Around NJ 2026 People Care Center, Bridgewater, NJ Joint Dance with Times Squares	6 to 9:00 (Change?) MS and Plus with an A2 tip

June 13th	Pride Dance 2111 Sansom	7 to 9:30 Mainstream and Plus	
August 15th through C1	Summer Splash Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek, Delaware Joint Dance with Times and Chesapeake Squares	1 to 5:00 Mainstream	
October 17th and Plus	Double Header 2111 Sansom	3 to 5:30 7 to 9:30	MS A2 and C1
December 5th through C1	Glitter Ball with Betsy Gotta Merion Friends Meeting House	3 to 6:30 Class level MS	

Details for Wheel Around NJ will not be finalized until Steve or Mike has spoken with Jim B. and a venue has been found.

The Board and Mike discussed dates and callers for the next summer open houses. The proposed dates are July 15th, August 12th, and September 16th. Steve will ask the church if the space is available and Mike will contact the callers. Mike said the soonest Betsy and Mark can start classes for fall of 2025 is September 23rd. Discussion of what classes and workshops to offer in fall of 2025 was pushed to the next meeting.

Summer Splash 2025

There was a discussion about the question of whether to hire Cameron to call at Summer Splash 2025. Mike spoke to Dayle after the last Board meeting. Dayle said that Chesapeake never told him they wanted him to co-host with another caller. He is willing to work with another caller. Mike asked the Board to decide whether he should negotiate a contract with Cameron. Tim asked if Cameron had been approached, and Steve said he had been approached informally by Chesapeake and confirmed that he was available. Peg spoke against hiring Cameron; David B., Ron, and Steve were in favor of going along with the other clubs' wish to hire Cameron.

David B. made a motion to hire Cameron for Summer Splash 2025. Steve seconded. The motion passed with four votes in favor, two votes against, and one abstention.

Mike will contact Cameron and make a contract. Ron will make a poster for the event with both callers' names.

Facilities – Steve

Steve will ask the church to fix the damaged patch in the floor in the back room (St. John's) and the closet light bulb. Steve also reported that he sent the church the contract with the amendment the Board approved, and the church has not yet responded to it.

Financial Assistance Program – Tim

Tim presented his concerns that the club's financial assistance program, which gives discounted rates to approved members, could be in violation of Pennsylvania state law concerning nonprofits. He cited a handbook which stated, "An organization's status as a nonprofit entity may be threatened if individuals receive compensation without rendering service," and argued that the discount would be considered financial compensation for those individuals. In addition, Tim argued that there was no transparency and the criteria for who qualified for financial assistance were not sufficient. He suggested that instead the club could lower prices for everyone or create a charitable fund for the financial assistance program separate from the club's budget. David B. responded, saying that he believed the financial assistance program did not violate any laws and was consistent with the club's principles. He talked to people from several clubs that have similar programs, and our policies are in line with theirs. Mike echoed the concern about lack of firm criteria. There was no further discussion.

At this point, Mike and Tim left.

The Board had previously discussed the suggestion of lowering prices for everyone over email and concluded that it would not be appropriate to change the club's fee structure mid-year. The next Board can discuss this further.

Recruitment – Steve

The Recruitment Committee will begin planning for this year's Pride events at their next meeting and will present to the Board at the next Board meeting. David B. asked about recruiting for next year's Board. Steve said he had heard nothing official. Ron said nobody has agreed to shadow him as Treasurer yet. David B. will talk to Katherine and David T. about joining the Nominating Committee.

Communications Report – Marika

The written report is attached to these minutes. David B. asked Marika to consider whether MailChimp would be a helpful tool for the club. Marika will push their Canva 101 class back to the fall. Flyers are covered for Saturday dances through 2025.

Advanced/Challenge Report – Peg

Peg said she was planning to reach out to see who will attend Advanced/Challenge on the days when several dancers will be away on the cruise. David B. asked Marika to send an email encouraging people to come on the cruise days, February 25th and March 4th.

MS/Plus Report – Vinney

Vinney said things were going well. There were two squares for Mainstream at the last Tuesday night, and the Plus dancers seem to be enthusiastic.

David B. made a motion for the club not to meet on April 15th, when both callers will be unavailable. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

At this point, Arin and Deb left.

Fly-In Issue – Ron

One of the Fly-In callers is asking that the club move roughly \$400 from his caller fee to his travel reimbursement. Ron feels that this could incur legal risk for the club, as it could be considered improperly reporting wages, and it would not look good for the club to give one caller different treatment than the others. Mike previously told Ron that he thought it would be legal, but he did not like the request. Ron believed that the club should stick with the contract that the caller already agreed to and not honor the request, but he wanted the Board to consider the issue. The Board decided to uphold the contract in place. Ron will report back to the Fly-In Committee and then talk to Mike.

The next meeting will be on February 20th, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Paulos
Secretary, Independence Squares

Independence Squares Treasurer's Report January 22, 2025

Attached is the December 2024 month-end financial summary.

Items of note, previously reported to the board via email on 1/3/2025:

- The year-to-date net income for the Tuesday night classes shows positive income of \$469.91. This is misleading because of the fact that 17 dancers prepaid for classes during December resulting in an inflow of \$1309.00 which will be depleted over the next few months as the prepaid classes actually occur.
- "Misc Expenses" increased by \$739.54 to \$1399.44. This increase was the cost of the t-shirt printing. There were 80 shirts ordered plus one baby jersey for Maren and Zack. If the board agrees that the baby jersey will be a gift from the club, then reimbursement to the club for the 80 t-shirts will total \$800 which will result in net income of \$60.46. That will be reduced by fees charged for PayPal payments.
[New note: Ron will make a motion that the baby jersey be a gift to Maren & Zack from the club]
- New to the balance sheet this month are line items for prepaid 2027 Fly-In admission fees and related PayPal fees. This is due to a rollover of a 2025 Fly-In registration to 2027. This is contrary to our policy of allowing a one-time only roll over to the following year's event but was agreed to by Ron and Mary Kay because of the fact that the registrants, who are not club members, had very extenuating circumstances and are hugely supportive of our club. They were advised of the fact that this is a one-time only exception, and they were extremely grateful.
- New to the Profit and Loss Summary, as recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the board, is a line item titled "Financial Assistance Accommodation" reflecting the discounts granted to club members who are approved for this program. This figure reflects the difference between the stated dance admission fee and the fee actually paid by these club members.
- The balance of our PNC checking account is a bit higher than I'd like but is due to the fact that the Sheraton will be pulling a payment from this account on 1/6/25 in the amount of \$1999.00 as required by our 2025 Fly-In venue contract. This contract was previously approved by the board and this disbursement has been authorized by the Finance Committee, as required.

We have CD's coming to maturity on 2/13/25, 4/18/25, and 5/13/25. Ron intends to convert the February CD to cash to help cover Fly-In expenses. The other CD's will be dealt with as they come due, as the Finance Committee sees fit.

January 4, 2025 A2/C1 dance finances are as follows:

- Door admission fees: \$175.00
- Caller fee: \$325.00
- Hall rent: \$90.00
- Net Loss: \$240.00

T-shirt accounting (through 1/19/25) (Note: not all t-shirts have been paid for yet):

- Income: \$530.00
- Cost of t-shirts: \$739.54
- PayPal fees: \$7.38

Respectfully submitted, Ron R

Independence Squares Finance Committee Report

January 22, 2025

The last Finance Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. Those details have previously been communicated to the board.

- As instructed by the board, the Finance Committee has, via email, drafted and approved an “Application for Caller School Scholarship”. The application is attached for the board’s approval. If this application is approved, the board needs to move forward with a plan to advertise this new program, including the possibility of posting the application to the club’s website. This is line with the recommendation approved by the board at the October 16, 2024 meeting as follows:

Approved Recommendation: 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 the cost of one and one-half hotel nights (including tax and service charges) required to attend the school. Up to two individuals can be approved 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.

[Note: Ron will make a motion for the board to approve this application]

- The board also needs to put together a plan regarding the following recommendation that was approved at the October 16, 2024 board meeting:

Approved Recommendation: 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 currently professional 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.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron R, Finance Committee member

APPLICATION FOR GCA CALLER SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

General information: The Independence Squares' Board of Directors will consider a scholarship for up to two active club members to attend the GCA caller school at the IAGSDC Convention in July, 2025. Costs to be covered will include the cost of the GCA school itself plus the cost of one and one-half hotel nights (including tax and service charges) required to attend the school. An application is required from those wishing to request a scholarship.

Please provide the following information and return this application to any current board member.

Name of applicant:

Phone number:

Email address:

Cost of GCA caller school:

Cost of hotel room, including tax and service charges:

Please provide a statement below indicating how your attendance at the GCA caller school will benefit Independence Squares:

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – January 22, 2025

The information below is accurate as of January 20, 2025, 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, 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

FYI Notes

- 1) Saturday, August 2025 Summer Splash – Dayle has been hired as the caller. Mike has asked the board to weigh in on the hiring of a second caller as has been requested by Chesapeake Squares.
- 2) 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. 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.
- 3) Please note that both Mark and Betsy will 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 Report

Most flyers for upcoming 2025 events have been made and can be included in the large print order that will be placed prior to the fly-in.

I am considering whether it makes more sense to hold the previously discussed Canva 101 training in the summer or fall since flyers for most 2025 events have now been made. I want to ensure folks who participate have the opportunity to make flyers afterwards if they choose to do so.

Ongoing:

- Fly-In promotion posts are popping up regularly on Facebook and Instagram. Everyone is encouraged to share those posts and help highlight the event!
- 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 V., Leda, Roy, and Arin for sharing info for snapshots already!

Fly-In Committee Report

January 22, 2025

The last Fly-In Committee meeting was held on December 4, 2024 and those details have previously been reported to the board. We will meet next on January 24, 2025.

Numbers update (as of 1/19/25)

- 112 registered dancers. Increase of 6 from our last report
- \$10,240.00 registration dollars
- Hotel room count: 105. We are contracted for 140, with a minimum guarantee on our part of 112

Caller updates

- Sandie Bryant hasn't returned her contract for 2026 yet. Mike is still following up.
- Don Moger, one of the callers for our 2025 Fly-In has requested that his pay structure be changed in order to keep his calling fee at less than \$600, with the balance of his contracted calling fee paid as travel costs. Guidance from the board on this issue is needed.

Dance schedule

Has been posted to website and given to all registered dancers

Advertising

- "What is a Fly In?" document has been emailed to all of our new class members.
- FAQ section has been posted to website and given to all registered dancers.
- New Dancer Guide had been given to all new class members and emailed to all registered dancers.

Registrar outreach

Mass mailing has been sent to all registered dancers with up-to-date information about the Fly-In. Additionally, Ron reached out to roughly 35 dancers who came to the 2024 Fly-In but were not registered for 2025. This resulted in 6 new registrations, with more expected to follow.

2026 theme

The committee needs to discuss this since a flyer has to be prepared before our big print job in March. 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 board is encouraged to offer suggestions.

2027 Fly-In

- Barry Clasper, Eric Henerlau, and Mark Franks have agreed to call for the 2027 Fly-In. Contracts are in the process of being signed.
- Ron has begun discussions with the Sheraton to ask about availability and pricing for 2027. Negotiations with the Sheraton went very well, with our price being increased just a little bit (roughly 5%) while keeping our perks in place. They have also agreed to let us wait until April, 2025 for a decision from us on whether we will return to their venue or not, and they are willing to look at the possibility of lowering our price at that time. No details are being provided to the board at this time since the Fly-In Committee hasn't yet discussed this and therefore has no recommendation yet for the board. Ron also had a conversation with the hotel regarding the committee's concern about the sale of the hotel and the impending renovations. The hotel has assured us that the sale has been completed and that pending renovations will not affect us negatively.

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