

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
May 28th, 2025 at 7:00 PM**

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

Board Members Absent: None

Guests: Cindy, Dave T., George, Kellie, Linda, Will

Motions Made Over Email

In an email on May 1st, Dave. B. made the following motions:

Motion 1

Board shall approve a budget of \$170 for the graduation dance, to include half a sheet cake and decorations.

Motion 2

Board shall approve funds to provide club name badges to all MS class graduates. Badges with pins are the most-expensive option at \$14.57 each. We have 8-10 prospective graduates, so amount proposed is \$150.

Motion 3

Board shall give all new Mainstream class graduates a one-year club membership, starting on June 3, 2025 and continuing to the club's annual meeting in 2026.

For clarity, Motion 3 was amended to state "starting on June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026." Vinney seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

In an email on May 9th, Steve made a motion that Independence Squares will host a Round Dance Lesson on Tuesday, July 29, 2025 from 7 to 9 pm in the Red Cross Room at 2111 Sansom with Ron Rumble teaching the lesson. Dave B. seconded. Ron and Vinney recused themselves. The motion passed with five votes in favor.

Dave B. made a motion that the fee structure for the Round Dance Lesson will be \$5 for members and \$8 for nonmembers. Peg seconded. Ron and Vinney recused themselves. The motion passed with five votes in favor.

The by-laws stipulate that "members must have completed a Mainstream class and shall be elected by two thirds vote of the Board of Directors." In an email on May 11th, Steve made a motion that the seven graduating class members of the 2025 Independence Squares Mainstream class be accepted as members of the club. Ron seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Secretary's Report - Sarah

Peg made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Sarah seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report - Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. Ron went over his report and the monthly financials. Fly-In figures are now on the Profit & Loss sheet. Linda asked what the club pays for insurance per member, and Ron estimated \$7 per member. The CD's that were recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Board have been opened. Ron met with Cindy and Katherine to discuss the turnover of the Treasurer's role to them after the election. Ron, Cindy, and Katherine will be away during the Pride dance. Steve volunteered to handle money at the dance. New signers for the financial accounts will be appointed at a time yet to be determined. Ron will help the new Treasurer with changing the signers on the PNC account.

Fly-in Committee Report – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. The committee has not met since their last report.

On April 24th, Ron emailed the Board to ask them to consider two proposals from the Fly-In Committee so they could be enacted before the May Board meeting. The Fly-In Committee recommended that the Board approve an amendment to the 2026 contract with the Sheraton to match the dance space and room nights that we had for 2025. The Committee requested approval to move ahead with the contract that Ron has negotiated with the Sheraton for 2027.

Ron made a motion over email that the Board accept the Fly-In proposals as outlined in his email to the board on April 24, 2025. Dave B. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There are 99 dancers registered for 2026. A contract has been signed with the Sheraton for 2027 as approved by the Board. Ron reported positively about a conversation he had with the President of Times Squares about his club's interest in having their fly-in at the Sheraton.

New Directory – Steve

Mike wrote in an email that he was willing to help make a new club directory. Steve will coordinate with Mike and Marika.

Caller Liaison Report – Mike

Mike was not present, but he submitted a written report, attached. Dave B. went over the report verbally. Callers have been found for Saturday, January 3rd, and Saturday, March 28th, and Dave B. asked Marika to update the website if they had not already.

Steve reported that there will be at least 45 people from the Northern New Jersey Square Dancers Association at Wheel Around NJ, and there could be as many as ten squares total. He requested a budget to pay for additional snacks. Dave B. will purchase the snacks.

Dave B. made a motion to allocate up to \$100 for food for Wheel Around NJ. Ron seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

HASP Report & Accident Response Procedures – Linda

HASP has not met recently as there has been no urgent need. Linda sent the Board information about accident insurance from United Square Dancers of America (USDA), which covers the club and its members while participating in club activities. Linda suggested telling members about it. Ron pointed out that there are accident forms in the binder at the church that has the QR code for parking. Linda will write a summary of important information about insurance. Marika will create a “member benefits” section on the website that will mention the insurance coverage.

Annual Meeting – Dave B.

Dave B. will send out another email to the members reminding them about the annual meeting. Steve will be in charge of sending out the ballots using Election Buddy. Ron will send him the list of members. Steve asked for someone else to be the judge of elections, and Peg volunteered.

Dave B. made a motion to approve \$29 for voting expenses. Steve seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Recruitment Committee – Steve

The written report is attached to these minutes. Many people have volunteered to help out at Pride on June 1st. Steve will coordinate with the volunteers.

Communications Report – Marika

The written report is attached to these minutes. Marika and Chris have plans to transfer the role of Communications Coordinator. They would also like to create a formal Publicity Committee which would handle social media, flyers, and other things. Chris has volunteered to chair the committee, and he will advertise it at the annual meeting. Dave B. established the Publicity Committee as a new standing committee. The Fly-In registrar asked for access to the Independence Squares email so that she can reply to emails directly, and Dave B. okayed it.

Class/Workshop Schedule

Dave B. verbally went over the spreadsheets that Marika created to represent different proposal schedules. The options requiring three callers are not realistic for this year but could

be a good way forward in future years. Most of the options the Board considered so far include a Mainstream Class, Mainstream Workshop, Plus Workshop, Advanced Workshop, and Challenge Workshop. Dave T. raised the question of whether to instead schedule a Mainstream Class, Plus Class, Advanced Workshop, and Challenge Workshop, and there was a lot of enthusiasm for that idea. Some members also expressed interest in having “club nights” in addition to the regular Tuesday nights.

MS/Plus Report – Vinney

There were seven Mainstream and seven Plus graduates. Vinney felt that the Mainstream graduates were enthusiastic and were well-placed to move onto Plus. Arin, Marika, and Justin have expressed interest in taking an Advanced class in the future. There is strong potential to offer an Advanced class in 2026-2027.

Old Business

The Board previously discussed trying to get more formal club shirts made. Mike tried to contact the business that made the black club shirts, and they have gone out of business.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah
Secretary, Independence Squares

Independence Squares Treasurer's Report

May 28, 2025

Attached is the April 2025 month-end financial summary.

Items of note are as follows:

- As recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the board, three new CDs were opened at Live Oak Bank as follows:
 - \$5,000, 6-month CD
 - \$10,000, 9-month CD
 - \$20,000, 12-month CD
- Ron had a second Zoom call with Cindy and Katherine to discuss the turnover of the treasurer's role to them as expected at our annual meeting. There is a plan in place for Cindy and Katherine to visit Ron at his home on June 18 to take possession of the QuickBooks file, the checkbook, and other miscellaneous items.
- Below is an update regarding treasury related coverage at upcoming dances:
 - Wheel Around NJ. Ron will be away, but Cindy and Katherine will cover the treasurer's table. Help has already been solicited for the 50/50. A check for the caller has been given to Steve for disbursement. Ron will work with Cindy and Katherine after the event to finalize the financial results and provide a report to Times Squares and to settle the financial matters.
 - Pride Dance. Cindy and Katherine will be away, and Ron will also be away, so coverage is needed for this dance. A check for the caller has been given to Steve for disbursement.
- USDA insurance. After the annual meeting, Ron will handle the addition of our new club members to our insurance roster and will facilitate the payment of the premium.
- Steve has been given instructions regarding the procedure for changing signers at Live Oak Bank once the new officers are elected, and the new signers have been determined. Ron will be responsible for working with our new club treasurers to get the signers changed at PNC Bank and with PayPal. Sarah has agreed to provide a copy of the minutes of the annual meeting as quickly as possible so that they can be given to PNC Bank as required when signers are changed.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron R

Independence Squares Fly-In Committee Report

May 28, 2025

No committee meetings have been held since our last report.

- 2026 Fly-In
 - We have 99 registered dancers with \$9085.00 in registration funds.
 - As approved by the board, our contract with the Sheraton has been amended to increase our dance space to that which we had at the 2025 Fly-In. The room block has also been increased as approved by the board.
- 2027 Fly-In
 - As approved by the board, a contract has been signed with the Sheraton for our 2027 Fly-In.
- Times Squares 2026 Fly-In
 - Ron had a phone conversation with Kim Norland, the President of Times Squares regarding his club's interest in holding its 2026 Fly-In at the Langhorne Sheraton. Times Squares is exploring this option and wanted help in understanding the negotiations that we've had with the hotel. Ron was frank in stating his concern about the possibility of Times Squares damaging our club's negotiations in the future. But the conversation was a good one and we agreed to work together in assuring that both clubs get the best terms possible. Kim did state that he felt that the hotel would be too expensive for his club to pursue and he indicated that he would be discussing our phone conversation with his board.

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – May 28, 2025

The information below is accurate as of May 26, 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 2027

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place May 2025 through April 2027.

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

Tuesday, July 22, 2025 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Tuesday, August 12, 2025 – Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday, August 23, 2025 – Summer Splash All-level dance Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Cameron Harnish will be calling as well from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek – Joint Dance with DC Lambda Squares and Chesapeake Squares

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 Open House Clay Goss 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

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 – 6:30 pm

Saturday, January 3, 2026 – Advanced and C1 – Brian Jarvis 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, February 14, 2026 – Valentine's Dance Class level Mainstream and Plus – 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Betsy Gotta

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

Saturday, March 28, 2026 – Advanced and C1 – Kent Forrester 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, April 18, 2026 - 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm SSD and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 Mark Franks

Saturday, June 13, 2026 – Mainstream and Plus Pride Dance Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, August 15, 2026 Summer Splash All-level Dance Mainstream – 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 17, 2026 - 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm Advanced and C1; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner (Social?); 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Mainstream and Plus Betsy Gotta

Saturday, December 5, 2026 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Betsy Gotta – Merion Friends Meeting House 3:00 pm – 6:30 pm

April 2027 Fly-in: Callers: Barry Clasper, Mark Franks, Eric Henerlau April 2-4, 2027 Sheraton Bucks County

FYI Notes

- 1) Similar to last year, I am recommending not hiring another caller on nights when only one of the callers is out that evening. The programs to be called on those nights will be determined by which classes are being offered at the time and what the final schedule of classes and workshops are as determined by the board.
- 2) I was given a list by the board as to potential dance dates for 2026. All of the recommended dates have been confirmed other than the Wheel Around NJ joint dance with Times Squares. No caller has been hired for that event as neither a final date nor a location have yet been determined.

Health and Safety Protocols Report to the Independence Squares Board May 2025

HASP is continuing to monitor health and safety issues. There are no pressing health and safety issues right now, so we have not been meeting lately.

Linda Bourdet

Chair, Health and Safety Protocols Committee

COMMITTEE JOB FAIR

HASP is pulling together a presentation of the committee and its focus, past, present, and future initiatives with the intention of encouraging people to attend meetings and / or join the committee and share their ideas. Handouts so far include current HASP protocols, HASP committee overview, and the most recent government recommendations for COVID vaccinations.

INSURANCE

- Independence Squares pays for insurance on all club members through the United Square Dancers of America (USDA) Commercial General Liability and Accident Medical Insurance Program. <https://www.usda.org/Trifold/Insflier.pdf>
- What is covered: “Accidental bodily injury sustained by an insured person while participating in dancing activities sponsored and supervised by a recognized club or organization.”
- We pay a flat fee for each member of Independence Squares to cover the cost of the insurance. In the Independence Squares Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, there is a line item of \$500.00 for Insurance, based on a projected total of the club having 66 members.
- After the annual meeting, Ron will handle the addition of our new club members to our insurance roster and will facilitate the payment of the premium.
- The USDA requires that we fill in Club Accident Report reporting on When, Where, Why & How It Happened. It must be signed by a club officer.
- The Club Accident Report form and the Liability and Accident Medical Coverage summary are attached to the email.

Report from the Independence Squares Recruitment Committee Meeting on May 18, 2025

Chris, George, Marika and Steve met via Zoom on 5/18 to discuss June pride events and a few other things. We will schedule another meeting in June or July that will accommodate Coco's schedule. We will discuss the South New Jersey pride festival on September 7 at that meeting.

Steve mentioned that he gave an open house flyer to his primary care physician and she was very receptive. Her practice has a lot of clients in the queer community.

We reviewed an email to the club about the need for volunteers for June pride events and Marika sent it out.

We talked about the June 1 pride event. George is able to be there and Chris might also be able to attend. Vinney got lots of Mainstream and Plus dancers to volunteer to help. Steve sent them all individualized emails thanking them for volunteering and asking which hours will work for them. At our table we will have two copies of each of 3 flyers taped to the table. There will be flyers and palm cards about our open houses to pass out. We will collect email addresses and phone numbers of prospective new dancers as well.

Dave Tavani is passing out palm cards on June 7 at the Media Pride Parade.

Steve is the point person for the Delco Pride Fest on June 14 where we have a booth. So far Dave Blatt and Sarah have volunteered to help with that.

After the June 3 Annual Meeting, Marika will be the chair of the Recruitment Committee. Steve will continue to be very active on the committee but Marika will be in charge of chairing the meetings, setting meeting times, creating Zoom links and recording notes for the meetings. Of course they can delegate some or all of these responsibilities.

Steve mentioned that he hopes we will continue to be innovative in our approach to recruitment moving forward and to try varied approaches. He encouraged Committee members to think outside the box. If we come up with new ideas we can apply for a Development Grant from IAGSDC and All Join Hands to help pay for implementing one new idea. More information about Development Grants can be found at https://iagsdc.org/club_dev/add but you must be logged in as a member of IAGSDC to follow the link. George pointed out that the Fun Dances we held in the past did have several positive aspects and all present agreed that it is hard to tell which of our activities promote the long term goal of being known and referenced in the wider Philadelphia queer community.

Communications Coordinator Report

Chris Deephouse and I have scheduled a meeting to train him on the Communication Coordinator role following the annual meeting.

Chris Deephouse, Steve Demos, and I propose starting a Publicity Committee that will be responsible for club flyers, social media, and other publicity efforts. This committee will reflect the current practice of publicity related responsibilities being managed by multiple club members. For example, Arin Barth, Marika Barth, Steve Demos, Ron Rumble, and Roy Wilbur all help make flyers. Arin Barth and Steve Demos help manage social media accounts. There is a need for additional club members to help make flyers and take photos for social media. As the incoming Communication Coordinator, Chris Deephouse has agreed to chair this committee over the upcoming year and help promote it at the upcoming "job fair."

Peg Wilsbach, fly-in registrar, has asked to have access to the Independence Squares email account so she can respond to fly-in related communication directly.

Submitted by Marika