

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
Thursday, January 8th, 2026, at 07:00 PM via Zoom**

Board Members Present: Chris, Dave T., Katherine & Cindy, Kellie & Eileen, Sarah, Steve

Board Members Absent: None

Guests Present: Deb, Will

Approval of the Minutes – Sarah

Steve made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. The Treasurer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Filling the Empty Seat on our Board

Marika resigned as President Elect in a letter on December 16th. Steve thanked them for their contributions to the club, especially their impressive work towards recruiting new dancers. The Board discussed whether to appoint a Vice President to serve for the rest of the year. Cindy, Dave T., and Steve will continue looking for potential candidates. Steve appointed Dave T. as chair of the Nominating Committee, with thanks from the club.

Reminder of Ethics Code

When joining the Zoom meeting, all attendees saw a pop-up box to remind everyone of the Ethics Code the Board adopted in July. Steve let the board members know that the pop-up would appear for all club Zoom meetings including committee meetings and asked the Board members if they were okay with that. No objections were raised.

Treasurer's Report – Katherine and Cindy

Cindy gave the Treasurer's Report. The written report is attached to these minutes. There were 80 dancers at the Glitter Ball. Classes continue to operate at a loss, but income from weekend dances has been roughly equal to expenses.

There was a discussion about obtaining a small games of chance license for our Fly-In. There were some concerns that, as it was only two months until the Fly-In, changing our procedures could be too much of a burden on our Fly-In volunteers.

Eileen made a motion for the club to apply for a small game of chance license in 2027 but not in 2026. Dave T. seconded. The motion did not pass with two votes in favor, three votes against, and one abstention.

The Treasurer will submit the application for the small games of chance license to the Bucks County Treasurer's Office.

Encouraging New Callers

Chris gave an update on the committee for encouraging the development of new callers.

Facilities Committee – Steve and Sarah

Steve is organizing volunteers to open and close the church during the 10 weeks he will be away. The church sent an email saying that rates will increase on February 1st but did not specify what the increase will be. We have a new PO Box. The old PO Box will remain active until June.

The Facilities Committee recommended that we hold the July 14th dance at the Arch Street Meeting House. The cost to rent a room from 6:15 to 9:45 PM would be \$280.

Steve made a motion to pursue a contract with Arch Street Meeting House for our July 14th dance. Chris seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Sarah will find out if the Arch Street Meeting House is available on that date.

Publicity Committee – Chris

Chris, Dave B., and Steve are checking the flyers that volunteers make for any errors. A flyer will need to be made for the July 14th dance.

Mainstream and Plus Program Rep Report – Kellie and Eileen

Kellie shared the results of the poll that she sent to the Mainstream and Plus Classes, which showed that almost all of the respondents were happy with the pace of classes.

Advanced and Challenge Program Rep Report – Dave T.

Dave T. reported that the Advanced/Challenge dance on Saturday, January 3rd went well. There were two squares, and the caller did a great job.

At this point, Eileen left the meeting.

Caller Liaison Committee

The written report is attached to these minutes. There was a discussion about whether to make the Pride Dance in June a member appreciation dance and offer free entrance to club members.

Chris made a motion to charge \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members at the Pride Dance in June. The Treasurer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The date of the first Open House will be June 16th.

The Caller Liaison Committee supplied the list of hiring criteria that the Board asked for. This needs to be discussed at the next meeting when Mike is present.

Old and New Business

Ron is planning the Phillies Pride Night, which he announced at the most recent Tuesday night.

There was a discussion about Kellie's email from December 1st pertaining to the controversial hiring of a certain caller. The Board considered whether new procedures should be put in place to mediate conflicts between club members and protect members from toxic behavior. No decisions were made.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM. The next meeting will be on Monday, February 9th.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah
Secretary, Independence Squares

Treasurer's report – for Board meeting on January 8, 2026

- We began the current fiscal year on June 1st with a balance across all accounts of \$52,793.12. Current balance across these accounts, as of 12/31/2025, is \$52,709.28.
- Through December 31st, Tuesday class expenses (comprised of caller fees, hall rental and PayPal fees) exceeded class fee income by 62% (-\$1,916.48).
- Through 12/31/25, expenses for club dances were essentially equal to income. The net loss was \$157.40 but Merion Friends Meeting will be returning our security deposit check for \$150 and that will leave the net loss at \$7.40.
- Glitter Ball admission fee income exceeded Glitter Ball expenses (i.e., caller fee and hall rental) by \$30.00. We had 80 people in attendance!
- Thanks, in large part, to interest income on the Live Oak accounts, General club expenses exceeded General income (comprised of membership dues and the LiveOak interest) by only 10.7% (-\$211.21). Overall, across all categories, our expenses exceeded income by 32.7% (-\$2,487.31). (This, of course, does not include anything Fly-in related.)
- We needed to move \$2,000 from LiveOak Savings to PNC Checking in November to cover routine caller/hall rental/storage expenses. The infusion of cash from the Glitter Ball admission fees (\$790.00) meant that we were able to cover December expenses without pulling additional funds from LiveOak Savings. Since Tuesday classes will continue to operate at a significant loss, we will likely need to continue to draw funds from LiveOak Savings to cover routine monthly expenses going forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Konecko and Katherine Cheetham

Co-Treasurers

Caller Liaison Committee Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – January 8, 2026

The information below is accurate as of January 6, 2026, 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.

Please inform the Caller Liaison Committee of any changes regarding policies concerning the hiring of callers and dance schedules allowing ample time for the committee to make any adjustments or changes.

Dances Through April 2028

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place January 8, 2026 through April 2028.

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, May 9, 2026 – Mainstream and Plus – Dan Koft Wheel Around NJ **People Care Center, Bridgewater, NJ 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

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

Tuesday, July 14, 2026 – Mainstream and Plus Dayle Hodge 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

Tuesday, September 8, 2026 Open House Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

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

Saturday, January 9, 2027 – Advanced and C1 Mark Franks 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, February 13, 2027 – Mainstream and Plus Valentine's Dance David Hartman

3:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Saturday, March 13, 2027 - 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm Mainstream and Plus; 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Dinner; 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm Advanced and C1 Betsy Gotta

April 2027 Fly-in: Callers: Barry Clasper, Mark Franks, Eric Henerlau, John Hawley April 2-4, 2027 Sheraton Bucks County Please note that John Hawley will only be calling on Saturday, April 3, 2027

Saturday, June 12, 2027 – Mainstream and Plus Pride Dance Betsy Gotta 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, August 21, 2027 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 David Hartman will be calling with Dayle during the first half of this dance.

Saturday, December 4, 2027 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge – Merion Friends Meeting House 3:00 pm – 6:30 pm

March 31 – April 2, 2028 Fly-in: Callers: Betsy Gotta, Michael Kellogg, Justin Russell, Brian Jarvis Sheraton Bucks County Please note that Brian Jarvis will only be calling on Saturday, April 1, 2028

FYI Notes

- 1) David Hartman has been hired to call on January 27, 2026 when Betsy Gotta will be out of town. As in his previous engagement with Independence Squares, he will be calling for the Mainstream and Plus classes and Mark Franks will be calling the Advanced and C1 workshops.
- 2) Dayle Hodge has been hired to call on March 31, 2026 when Betsy Gotta will be attending CallerLab. He will be calling the Mainstream class and the C1 workshop.
- 3) The committee is working on scheduling the 2026 Open Houses based on the preferred dates provided by the recruitment committee. While the second one has been scheduled, the first one is awaiting further directions from the board as to the date.
- 4) Both Betsy Gotta and Mark Franks will be available and ready to start classes on September 22, 2026. The next step for the board is to determine what programs to offer and whether it be a class or a workshop.
- 5) The committee is working on scheduling dances for 2027 based on the preferred dates from the board.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rutkowski

Linda Bourdet

Dave Blatt

Independence Squares Fly-In Committee Report

January 8, 2026

No committee meeting has been held since the last board meeting on November 8, 2025. The next Fly-In committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, January 9, 2026.

Numbers update

We have 126 registrants (an increase of 11 from the 11/25/25 report) and \$11,095 in registration fees (an increase of \$270.00 for the 11/25/25 report). Our budget for registration fees is \$13,000. We have 120 room nights sold. We have a room block of 140 rooms, with an obligation to sell 112 rooms.

Print job

The board is reminded of its commitment to have most of the 2026 flyers ready for printing by 2/25/26.

Mainstream class invitation to Fly-In

The club's Caller Liaison is working with Betsy to determine whether the new MS class will be ready for the Fly-In. The committee will discuss this in more detail once we have more information from the Caller Liaison.

January advertising push

Extensive plans are being put in place to push the 2026 Fly-In, beginning in January 2026. This includes advertising in the Delaware Valley Federation newsletter, flyer distribution through All Join Hands, delivery of flyers to clubs within the NNJSDA footprint, and outreach to previous attendees who are not yet registered for 2026.

Small Games of Chance license

Ron has worked with Cindy on the club's request to obtain this license for the 2026 Fly-In. A request has been made to the Fly-In committee chairs to ask the board if it might be willing to postpone the procurement of a license for 2026, and instead, make plans to begin implementation with the 2027 Fly-In. The request has been made due to the short time frame to get this implemented for 2026. The committee hereby asks the board to consider this and render a decision. Meanwhile, the committee is moving forward with discussion of plans under the assumption that the license will be mandated by the board.

2027 Fly-In (April 2-4, 2027)

John Hawley has agreed to be our "Saturday Only" caller, with compensation that is within the guidelines approved by the board.

2028 Fly In (March 31-April 2, 2028)

Our recommended callers, Michael Kellogg, Betsy Gotta, and Justin Russell, have agreed to be on staff. The Caller Liaison reports that none of the callers requested a fee increase from what we have been offering in recent years. Additionally, Brian Jarvis has agreed to be our "Saturday Only" caller with the same fee structure that was offered to John Hawley for the 2027 Fly-In, except for a likely slight increase in the hotel room cost. The Sheraton won't discuss pricing until later this year. Ron has begun a conversation with Helms Brisco, a convention site broker. They put out feelers to the local hotels that they work with but to date, there have been no hotels expressing interest in hosting us.