

**Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting
Thursday, October 30th, 2025 at 7:00 PM via Zoom**

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

Board Members Absent: Kellie

Guests: Arin, Deb, Mike, Pattie, Ron, Tim, Will

Approval of the Minutes – Sarah

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

Treasure's Report – Katherine and Cindy

The written report is attached to these minutes. Income in September is expected to be higher than next month's income because 13 dancers prepaid. Expenses in September included the annual Zoom renewal, social media advertising, a bank service charge due to a lost check, and a get-well card. As previously mentioned, one of our certificates of deposit (CDs) matured on October 23rd, and that money has been transferred to the savings account. The Treasurer is considering whether to invest in another 6-month CD.

At this point, Eileen joined the meeting.

Finance Committee Report – Steve

The Finance Committee has been looking into the legality of the club's 50/50 drawings and basket raffles. Their research suggests that we may require a small games of chance license in Bucks County to have raffles at the Fly-In. It looks like getting a license for events in Philadelphia County would be prohibitively difficult. In November, the Board will discuss what to do in light of this information. The Finance Committee will continue researching.

Caller Liaison Committee – Mike

The written report is attached. Substitute callers have been found for January 27th and March 31st. New contracts have been issued to Betsy and Mark reflecting their new rate of pay, but the contracts have not yet been returned. The Caller Liaison Committee has started contacting callers for 2027 dances. They asked the Board to allow the Caller Liaison Committee ample time to make any changes to the schedule or hire different callers. There was a discussion about how much advance notice is sufficient before asking the Caller Liaison Committee to find a substitute caller to avoid putting an undue burden on them.

Steve made a motion that if the Board learns of a caller absence within one month of the absence, it is up to the Caller Liaison Committee's discretion whether to hire a substitute

caller; otherwise, the Board encourages the Caller Liaison to find a substitute caller but recognizes that it may not be possible. Marika seconded. The motion passed with six votes in favor and one abstention.

Facilities Committee – Steve

The written report is attached to these minutes. The Facilities Committee recommends that the Board attempt to formalize a new contract with the Lutheran church for 2026. Steve will open a new, smaller PO Box for the club before Mike has to submit tax forms and will close out the current box in June. Sarah will hold the second key to the PO Box.

Publicity Committee – Chris

Chris hopes to get all active club members in the Google Group within the next week. Several people have signed up for the Canva training on November 12th. After the training, the attendees will have an opportunity to sign up to make flyers for our upcoming dances. The goal is to have all flyers ready by the print date.

Recruitment Committee – Marika

The written report is attached to these minutes. The Recruitment Committee recommends that the club hold two Open Houses next summer instead of three, one in June and one in September. The committee recommended choosing dates when Betsy would be available. Mike will begin scheduling the events with Betsy.

There was a discussion about encouraging field trips or non-square dancing social activities for the club. Examples included going to a museum, going on a guided tour through Philadelphia, board game night, or round dance lessons. Marika will draft an email to encourage club members to take the lead on planning events.

Mainstream and Plus Program Rep Report – Kellie and Eileen

Eileen reported that the new class members all seem to be having fun. Kellie has been sending emails every week. The Plus class had three squares, which led to concerns that the back room was too crowded with so many people.

At this point, Eileen left the meeting.

Advanced and Challenge Program Rep Report – Dave T.

Dave T. reported that the Advanced/Challenge workshops are going well.

Fly-In Committee – Ron

The written report is attached to these minutes. The committee recommends that the Board accept the hotel's terms for keeping the bar open late. Ron said that he will ask the hotel to commit to providing at least two bartenders, and he will bring the amended contract back to the Board. There is a concern that the Mainstream class may not have completed SSD by the Fly-In.

The committee requested approval from the Board to hire a fourth caller for Saturday only in 2027 and 2028. There was a discussion about the proposal.

Steve made a motion that the Board gives their blessing to the Fly-In Committee to hire a fourth caller for 2027 and/or 2028 as the committee sees fit, with expenses not to exceed \$1000. The Treasurer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The deadline for the Fly-In Committee's print order is February 25th.

Old and New Business

Mike ordered samples of the new black club shirts, which should arrive around the first week of December. He plans to open the online storefront for people to place orders in mid-December.

A new By-laws Committee has been convened. Dave B. will be the Chair.

Discussion of the letters from Dave B., Mike and Tim

Steve acknowledged that the emails were read by the board members and the concerns reflected in those emails were heard and understood. The topic of the emails was the hiring of callers. Additional discussion regarding the content of the letters did not result in any board decisions.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM. The next Board meeting will be on November 25th.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah
Secretary, Independence Squares

Treasurer's Report - Review of September 2025

- Typical monthly expenses during the class year include caller fees, hall rental, storage unit rental and PayPal fees. Additional expenses this month were for Outreach and Recruiting (social media advertising), the annual Zoom renewal and miscellaneous expenses (a Get Well card and a bank service charge for stop payment on a check - the IAGSDC check from last April reported lost).
- Tuesday night expenses (caller fees and hall rental) only exceeded class fees collected this month by about \$50. That was due, in large part, to 13 class members pre-paying for the 10-week period 9/23 through 12/2. Next month we would expect to see a greater disparity between Tuesday night income and expenses.
- Overall, for the fiscal year-to-date, we show a net income of \$108.87 over expenses.
- Uncharacteristically, we have a PayPal Account balance for September (\$53.48). September 30th was a class night and we neglected to transfer the class fees collected that night via PayPal to our PNC account until the next morning (October 1st). Thus, the amount appeared on the September statement for PayPal. We don't maintain a balance in the club's PayPal account.
- Although this is an October item, we wanted to confirm for everyone that the Live Oak Bank 6-month CD which carried a maturity date of 10/23/2025 was, in fact, closed out on that date and the balance at that time (\$5,096.85) was moved into the Live Oak Savings account.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy and Katherine
Co-Treasurers

Caller Liaison Committee Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – October 30, 2025

The information below is accurate as of October 29, 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.

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

Dances Through April 2027

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place September 23, 2025 through April 2027.

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, May 9, 2026 – Mainstream and Plus – Dan Koft Wheel Around NJ Time and Location To Be Determined

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 being called on those nights will be determined by which classes are being offered at the time. For this year that would be Mainstream and Plus. Please note that this allows an opportunity for all the participants on those nights to dance together instead of in separate rooms with no interaction between the programs. The lack of interaction among the programs was a major criticism by a number of former and current board members. In the past, this practice has at least partially addressed this issue.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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. A caller has been hired for that event but neither a final time nor a location have yet been determined.
- 4) I have also been given a list of potential dance dates in 2027. I have already started working on this, however, I cannot hire a caller for Summer Splash 2027 until Steve Demos contacts the joint partners, Chesapeake and DC Lambda, for their input. I have callers in mind, however, the responses from Chesapeake and DC Lambda are usually a long time in coming, so I am wishing Steve luck in getting a response.
- 5) The fly-in committee has been given recommendations for the 2028 fly-in and the potential callers will be contacted once the caller liaison committee receives the approval from the fly-in committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rutkowski

Linda Bourdet

Dave Blatt

Report from the Independence Squares Facilities Committee

Our committee met on Thursday, October 23 at 7pm via Zoom

Patti, Sarah and Steve attended. No chair of the committee was designated.

We agreed to recommend to the board that they attempt to nail down a contract with the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion for 2026.

We agreed to recommend to the board that we obtain a new and smaller PO Box at the same location our current one is located (3000 Chestnut Street) before Mike submits any tax forms.

We looked at Sarah's research into possible alternate sites for our Tuesday night classes and Saturday night dances. We will possibly take a field trip to the **Arch Street Meeting House** on November 1. Sarah looked at a variety of possibilities in Center City between the two rivers. We resolved to widen the search to West Philadelphia and even locations south of South Street.

Summer 2025 Recruitment Events

June

- 1 June 2025 - [Philly Pride 365](#)
 - Table, Steve Demos
- 7 June 2025 - [Delaware County Pride Parade](#)
 - Passing out palm cards, Dave Tavani
- 14 June 2025 - [Delaware County Pride Festival](#)
 - Table, Steve Demos
- 14 June 2025 - [Second Saturday: Pride Edition](#) **Event Cancelled Due to Rain**
 - Passing out palm cards, Cindy Konecko and Katherine Cheetham

July

- 22 July 2025 - Open House

August

- 12 August 2025 - Open House

September

- 16 September 2025 - Open House

October 2025 Recruitment Committee Report

- The Recruitment Committee has now held our final meeting for 2025. We will resume meetings in spring 2026 to prepare for the summer 2026 recruitment season.
- To support retention efforts this year, we recommend sending an email to the club encouraging members to volunteer to coordinate social outings. This email would include a brief description of the responsibilities involved with coordinating outings, a list of potential places for outings, and an offer to support with making and/or sharing flyers.
- Based on reflection of recruitment efforts this summer, the Recruitment Committee notes the following recommendations for recruitment during summer 2026:
 - To better reflect current volunteer availability, we recommend only tabling at Philly Pride 360 during summer 2026. We will provide palm cards for distribution and/or help to organize demos for other events only if someone is enthusiastic about taking the lead on that effort.
 - We recommend scheduling two open houses in 2026, ideally with Betsy:
 - A “Pride” open house on June 23rd or 30th to promote at Philly Pride 360
 - A fall open house on August 20th or September 1st or 8th, depending on Betsy’s availability (preferably closer to the start of lessons, but prioritize having Betsy as the caller)
 - Based on the [results](#) of paid social media advertising this summer we recommend budgeting \$150 for social media advertising again in summer 2026.

Independence Squares Fly-In Committee Report

October 30, 2025

A Fly-In Committee meeting was held via Zoom on Friday, October 17, 2025. Actionable items that need board discussion at this board meeting of October 30 are highlighted in yellow.

2026 Fly-In finances

- Registration fees received to date: \$9355.00 (budgeted for \$13,000.00)
- Number of dancers registered: 108
- Hotel rooms: 68 room nights booked (room block is 140 room nights, with a required guarantee on our part of 112)

Review of 2025 survey

Many complaints were received related to the hotel restaurant and bar. All comments have been discussed with the hotel contact who has promised to work to get a better outcome for 2026. Ron will follow up.

There were many other comments on the survey related to the dance program, which are being addressed by Marika, with assistance from Steve, as they put the 2026 dance schedule together. Other miscellaneous comments were discussed by the committee for improvements that might be made.

Hotel bar contract for 2026

The hotel is willing to provide the same terms regarding the bar as those offered in 2025. That will give us access to the bar on Friday and Saturday nights, from 10:30 PM until 2:00 AM, with all drinks during those hours credited toward our account. We will be obligated to guarantee sales of at least \$1,000 over the two nights. Enclosed are Event Orders (which detail the specifics of our rental, with the bar details added) and Guest Event Checks (which detail the rental costs for each day, including service fees and taxes) for board approval and signatures. The documents are specific to each day of our event. Ron has reviewed these documents, and they accurately reflect the terms of our already signed contract, with the addition of the bar details.

Hotel contract for 2026

Paid up to date. Next payment is due March 1, 2026.

Booked hotel rooms for callers and committee members

Hotel rooms have already been booked for the callers. Committee members who have special requests relayed those requests to Ron.

Walk-in rates for 2026

Established the walk-in rates to be the same as those for 2025, as follows:

- Friday: \$35
- Saturday until dinner \$45
- Saturday all day and evening \$80
- Saturday evening only \$35
- Sunday \$35
- Walk in Friday and Saturday \$115

Website update & New Dancer Guide

Marika will work to put together the very popular Fly-In Q&A's and New Dancer Guide. Ron will work with Chris to get these posted on the website at an appropriate time.

Fly-In t-shirts

Cost \$333.43. Income \$225.00 so far. \$108.00 short. Need to sell 8 more. One order is pending.

Decorations

There are several people who are known to committee members who might be able to assist with providing decorations with a circus theme. Vinney will follow up.

Baskets

Pattie will continue handling them. There was discussion regarding ways to make the process even better than it has been in the past. Some of the 2025 MS class graduates expressed confusion about baskets and a discussion was held to discuss ways to mitigate that confusion. Mary Kay will provide pictures on Tuesday nights, and Ron will put together a sample basket for display.

Door prizes

Eileen will speak with Norma about continuing to manage that for 2026, but she would like to have someone help them. This will ease the burden and will potentially train someone else to handle this in the future. Eileen will talk with Helena since she lives in the area.

Room monitoring program

Got good input in 2025 in all rooms except for C1. We can encourage our dancers to pay attention to counting in those rooms. Things that worked well in 2025: Talked about it at class prior to the Fly-In and provided a QR code for dancers to put the app on their phone. Additionally, we had the QR code posted at the registration table during the Fly-In. We should continue all of this for 2026.

MS class invitation to attend the 2026 Fly-In

Betsy isn't certain that she will be able to get the new MS class up to speed in time for the Fly-In since the event is earlier next year than it has been in the recent past. Her goal is to have the dancers ready for the Fly-In, but Ron and Betsy will touch base on this topic again in January. We will continue to promote the Fly-In with the new class but will let them know that we won't know more until the beginning of the new year.

Advertising

We agreed to continue advertising through All Join Hands. We will also advertise with the DelVal Federation and with the Northern NJ Grand Square. After the meeting, Ron learned that the next issue of the Grand Square won't come out until after the 2026 Fly-In, so we will have to plan to advertise there for the 2027 Fly-In later in 2026.

Dance program discussion

Markia, with feedback from Steve, has a draft of the 2026 dance program which was reviewed by the committee. Minor changes were suggested. There is still work to be done.

2027 Fly-In

The committee agreed on a Sci-Fi theme and plans were put in place to begin designing a flyer.

Approval by the board is hereby being requested for permission to hire a 4th "Guest Caller" for Saturday only. This would allow more flexibility in terms of giving the staff callers a bit more break time and would

allow us to schedule callers to work together in some of the halls instead of only working individually. This caller would be a more local caller in order to reduce the travel expense to the Fly-In. Ron had a subsequent discussion with our Caller Liaison which resulted in an outline to pay a fee of \$500-\$600. We would also provide a hotel room for two nights, travel expenses, and a meal allowance. **This requested approval extends to the 2028 Fly-In as well.**

2028 Fly-In

Dates

Decided on March 31-April 2, 2028.

Callers

Committee tentatively decided to make offers to Michael Kellogg (up to C3B), Betsy Gotta (up to C3B), and Justin Russell (up to A2), and Kent Forrester as a Saturday-only "Guest Caller", **if the board grants permission to hire an additional caller, as requested under the topic "2027 Fly-In" above.** The recommended callers will be discussed again at the next committee meeting and with committee approval, Ron will work with the Caller Liaison to make offers.

Venue

Ron has started a discussion with the Sheraton and has been advised that they are eager to host us, but they need our dates first. The hotel will figure out pricing for us once they have our dates. Note: After the committee meeting, Ron discussed this with his Sheraton contact who said that they cannot give us pricing until at least August 2026. Ron will follow up.

Flyer printing

Not discussed at the meeting but noted here for informational purposes is the topic of the club's flyer printing for 2026. Ron will submit an online order for Fly-In related printed materials around February 27, 2026. If the club wishes to continue the practice of piggybacking on this order for its flyers for the rest of 2026 and possibly early 2027, the PDFs of those flyers need to be provided to Ron no later than February 25, 2026. This practice has the benefit of saving the club money in printing costs, since online printing is less costly than using local printers, and the online printer that we've used in the past continues to advertise free shipping if the total cost of the order is over \$125.00. It is requested that the board notify Ron of its intention to participate in this printing or not by February 25, 2026.

Next meeting: November 21, 7:00 PM via Zoom.

Please reach out to Ron (ronrumble@gmail.com) if interested in receiving the full minutes of the meeting, which include more details than above.

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