

Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting

Start of meeting: Tuesday July 21, 2026 7:04 pm

Board Members Present

Steve Demos – President Elect

Michael Rutkowski -- President

Cindy Konecko – Co-Treasurer

Katherine Cheetham -- Co-Treasurer

Chris Deephouse – Communication Coordinator

Linda Bourdet -- Secretary

David Tavani – Advanced / Challenge Class Representative

Suzanne Datto – Mainstream / Plus Class Co-Representative

Helena Gallant – Mainstream / Plus Class Co-Representative

Guests Present

Bob

Sarah

Will

Tim

Ron

Opening Remarks

Mike reiterated that IS is a social group with one major purpose: keep the club going.

Discussion on format of meeting minutes

Linda asked for clarification of inclusion of full names or just first names in the minutes to be posted on IS web site and on the IS Google Drive folders. It was decided to include only first names for the IS web site and first and last names on IS Google Drive.

Approval of minutes: Steve made the motion to accept the minutes from the June 2, 2026 annual board meeting; Cindy seconded the motion; all voted in favor of approval.

Treasurers Report

Cindy presented the treasurers' report.

IAGSDC Delegates' Meeting Report

Tim Harper gave the IAGSDC Delegates' meeting report. Report and Bylaw Changes are attached.

Facilities Committee Report

Dance Halls

Committee is evaluating the rooms to be used for weekly classes and coordinating with the Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion church about cost and availability. The pantry is too small, the floor is peeling, and it is too humid and hot for dancing.

Doors Locking

It was reiterated that at the end of classes / dances, there must be two people who check by pulling on the handles while pressing down on the lever that the doors to the outside have indeed been successfully locked. Ron suggested that we video by phone the checking of the door in case of a question from the church if IS did not check adequately that the door was locked.

Arch Street Meeting House

The dance at Arch Street Meeting house at 320 Arch Street in Philadelphia on July 14, 2026 was a success and well-attended.

Discussion Points: Pro

- Comfortable space • Air-conditioned
- Nice wooden floor
- Good sound
- Good sight lines
- Free parking

Discussion points: Con

- Costs \$250 per hour and prohibitive for our regular use ○ Arch Street Meeting gave IS a 20% discount for our non-profit status
- Availability might not match our schedule
- Might have to raise entry fee to \$15 to cover the increased cost Discussion: Uses in the future
- Glitter Ball ○ Probably not large enough ○ Difficult to sell 50-50 chances due to Philadelphia regulations
- Weekend dance or Saturday dance
- Use in summer dances because of the air conditioning Discussion is on-going.

Caller Liaison Report

Mike, the chair of the Caller Liaison committee, gave the report and noted these activities:

- David Hartman has been booked to teach classes / workshops for Oct 13, 2026 and Dec 1, 2026 as a substitute for Mark and Betsy.
- Mike will look for a caller for July 2027 dance.
- Steve Demos reported that the new smaller Mainstream program will be in effect and taught in the classes starting September 2026. All Independence Squares dances will only include calls from that program when the advertised program is Mainstream.

Code of Conduct for IS Board Members

Discussion held on the revised Code of Conduct that applies to the IS Board. Mike made a motion to approve the revised Code of Conduct; seconded by Steve; vote was held and motion was approved with a vote of 6 in favor and 1 opposed.

Recruitment Committee

A square dance demo that had been scheduled for July 15, 2026 in Media event Dancing under the Stars was postponed to July 29, 2026 due to excessive heat on July 15.

Publicity

Publicity committee plans to change the password to the IS Google account. Discussion was held on who will have access to the new password. Treasurer has the complete list of passwords and who has access; this list will be reviewed and revised.

Advanced and Challenge Report

Ad/Ch class representative will share the new class / workshop schedule with the upcoming Advanced and Challenge class dancers.

Mainstream and Plus Report

- MS/Plus Class Representative asked for a list of class members; Cindy will send this list to Suzanne, Helena, and Mike.
- MS / Plus class representative will share the new class / workshop schedule with the upcoming Mainstream and Plus class dancers.
- New dancers came to summer July dance and are attending other clubs' events to practice their dancing skills.

Social Events

- Steve Demos and Marika Barth are arranging a field trip to the Philadelphia Art Museum on August 28, 2026 as a social opportunity for IS.
- Karaoke was offered as another possible social outing. Mike and Linda will look into this.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

Mike read from the bylaws on roles and responsibilities of the Secretary (internal communications) and the Communication Coordinator (external communications).

Discussion was held on clarifying internal vs external communications. Permission to email the IS community without moderation was granted by the Communication Coordinator to Secretary and to Treasurer(s).

IS Zoom Account Access

Discussion was held on processes to access the IS Zoom account, who should have access, and adding / removing relevant phone number to facilitate and streamline access.

IS Google Account Access

Steve ran a tutorial on access IS email through the IS Google account. This discussion is ongoing and access glitches will be reviewed.

Guidelines for Smooth Dancing

- The current committee members are: Chris Deephouse, Cindy Konecko, Steve Demos, Will Hamp.
- Steve wants to poll membership about their input and opinions on the guidelines.
- Cindy asked for, and will organize, feedback from the IS board to discuss at the August Board meeting.

Date for Next Board Meeting: Will be August 25, 2026 via Zoom.

Adjournment: Mike made a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion was seconded by Suzanne; meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda, Secretary, Independence Squares

Date Submitted: July 30, 2026

Treasurers' Report for Board meeting on 7/21/2026:

- The available balance across all accounts as of 6/30/2026 was \$58,682.33
- For the month of June total income was \$656 from:
 - Membership dues
 - Pride dance
 - Open House
 - Interest income
- For the month of June total expenses were \$765 from:
 - Hall rental
 - Caller fees
 - Storage unit
 - PayPal fees
 - Election Buddy
- Total Club member count as of June 30th was 75
- 50/50 can be run at Summer Splash. Delaware does not require a Small Games of Chance license for our situation:



can a non-profit run a 50/50 game in delaware

AI Overview

Yes, a non-profit can run a 50/50 raffle in Delaware, provided the organization holds official tax-exempt status (such as a 501(c)(3) designation) and registers with the state. [Zeffy](#)

Delaware law permits these games, but the organization must follow specific regulations and guidelines: [?](#)

- **Licensing & Permits:** Qualified non-profits must apply for a Charitable Gaming License and specific event permits through the **Delaware Division of Professional Regulation - Board of Charitable Gaming**. Permits generally cost \$15 for a single drawing. [labyrinthinc.com](#)
- **Pricing Limitations:** If tickets are priced at \$5 or less *and* the prize pool is under \$5,000, you are usually exempt from needing a formal permit. However, if the prize value exceeds \$5,000, a permit is required and your organization must have been operating in the state for at least two years. [Event.Gives +1](#)
- **Reporting Requirements:** When applying for event permits, organizations are required to list the exact retail cash value of the prize. You cannot list "50/50" or "indeterminate" on the forms. [Delaware.gov](#)
- **Ticket Sales:** Online or digital ticket sales for 50/50 raffles are generally **prohibited**; tickets must be sold and handled physically. [Event.Gives +1](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy and Katherine
Co-Treasurers

Report from July 1, 2026 IAGSDC Delegate Meeting, Montreal, QC, Canada

Marge Coahran (2026 Convention) reported that, as of Wednesday, July 1, Montreal had 795 registrants with 114 first time attendees.

Justin Crawshaw-Lopton (Treasurer) presented the IAGSDC Financial Report for 2025 indicating:

Total Income:	\$10,838
Total Operating Expenses:	\$15,900
Net Loss for 2025	\$5,062

Despite an anticipated net loss for 2026 of approximately \$2,610, dues for clubs will remain at the current level of \$1 per club member.

Proposed Budget for 2027 includes:

Projected Income:	\$9,475
Projected Expenses:	\$12,345
Projected Net Loss for 2027	\$2,870

A proposal is under discussion to drop the mid-year in-person meeting of IAGSDC officers (held the last two years at our Fly-In!) in favor of video meetings in order to trim travel expenses.

Joel Smith (Club Liaison Officer) noted that we currently have:

- 43 fully paid member clubs
- 2 member clubs with unpaid dues
- 4 Associate member organizations
- 9 fully paid Affiliate members
- 2 Affiliate members with unpaid dues

We lost one club (Cleveland Country Dancers), but Iron City Squares moved from Associate Member back to Full Member status.

We welcomed three new Full Member Clubs:

- Knights of the Grand Squares in Corpus Christi, TX
- Caribou Squares in 100 Mile House, BC, Canada
- Tropic Twirlers in Cairns, Australia

as well as one new Associate Club:

- Desert Challenge in Palm Springs, CA

Two clubs, Chesapeake Squares and Independence Squares, have held banner dances in 2026 to benefit the IAGSDC, as was the case in 2024 and 2025. The Executive Board urged other clubs to follow our example!

Recruitment and Retention meetings are held quarterly and are open to all interested dancers. Please contact the Club Liaison Officer for details. Clubs are again reminded that funds from All Join Hands are available via the Club Development/Club Connections Committee to assist in novel development projects (not routine club operations). Proposals should be submitted to the Club Liaison Officer.

Michael Levy (2025 Convention) reported that Hitchhike Across the Galaxy had: 930 attendees with 143 as first timers.

Ed Zeigler (Chair) reported that the new IAGSDC website is up and running. Clubs are asked to please ensure that their club page(s) on the IAGSDC website are up-to-date and accurate.

Harlan Kerr (CALLERLAB) provided an update on the CALLERLAB convention.

The new, consolidated entry level Mainstream Program has been capped at 50 calls. The Plus Program has been expanded to a minimum of 50 calls. The final lists of calls at each program have been finalized and are to be implemented September 1, 2026. New instruction guides for MS and Plus were just approved. The Advanced Program is to be reviewed next year.

Jane Clewe (GCA) reported 27 students at this year's Caller's School (*including our own Steve D.!!*). Eleven of those students were brand new.

Allan Hurst Provided a brief update on the Wiki/History Project and thanked all contributors, including our own Sarah P (!) for their efforts.

Pam Clasper (All Join Hands Canada) reported that AJH-C received \$4,372 in donations for 2025 and disbursed \$5,843 in project funding.

Gordon Macaw (All Join Hands US) reported that AJH- US received \$88,468 in donations, earned \$10,278 in interest income, and disbursed \$87,057 in project funding. Gordon thanked our own Mike R for his service as IAGSDC advisor to All Join Hands for the past four years and announced that Dirk Wold will be advisor for the next two-years.

[NB: The All Join Hands Board has elected Mike Rutkowski to the position of Associate Vice President.]

Pam and Gordon asked clubs to remind their members that individuals may make tax-deductible donations to All Join Hands Foundation (or All Join Hands Canada) and request those funds be directed to their club. The club will receive 100% of the directed donation and the donor can claim a tax deduction regardless of the tax status of the club since both AJH and AJH-Canada are recognized charities. Potential donors are also reminded to consider requesting matching contributions from employers.

James Ozanich (Memorial Panels Project) noted that there were 1,293 badges on the memorial panels as of the end of the 2025 Convention. James asked that clubs inform him in advance of any badges to be added to the panels so he can create a webpage for the individual(s) and keep track of the badge location. He also noted that both Badgeworks and Signs by Scott will provide memorial badges free of charge if a club is unable to locate an individual's original badge.

Future Conventions: No bid proposals were presented for 2030 or beyond. Current Schedule is:

2027 - Albuquerque, NM July 1-10, 2027

2028 - Denver, CO July 6-9, 2028

2029 - Palm Springs, CA May 9-14, 2029

2030 – No formal expressions of interest although groups in Washington DC and Kansas City indicated that they are discussing possibilities.

By-laws Changes:

All Proposed changes (see attached) were approved.

Election of Officers:

Chair:	Lee Aubert was elected to a 2-year term
Vice-Chair:	Kelly Shortandqueer is entering the second year of a 2-year term
Treasurer:	Michael Sattler was elected to a 2-year term
Secretary:	Jim Babcock is entering the second year of a 2-year term
Club Liaison Officer:	Joel Smith is entering the second year of a 2-year term

Proposed Bylaw Changes:

Globally Change Old:

LGBTQ*

To New to match tagline:

LGBTQ+

Old Article 3 Membership, Section 2. Types of Member Organizations

j. Associate Membership

Associate Membership shall be granted to those organizations that do not meet the requirements for Full Membership for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1) The organization is not LGBTQ* oriented;
- 2) The organization is run primarily for profit;
- 3) The organization is primarily for performance;
- 4) The organization has fewer than eight members; and/or
- 5) The organization is an LGBTQ* oriented, caller-run group using the CALLERLAB format.

New: Article 3 Membership, Section 2. Types of Member Organizations

j. Associate Membership

Associate Membership may be granted to organizations that do not meet the requirements for Full Membership, as determined by the Board of Directors.

Organizations may be classified as Associate Members for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The organization is not primarily oriented toward the LGBTQ+ community;
2. The organization is operated for profit. "For profit" includes any arrangement in which surplus revenue is distributed to an individual or individuals;
3. The organization is controlled or operated in a manner inconsistent with member governance or community benefit;
4. The organization is primarily performance-based rather than social dancing;
5. The organization has fewer than eight (8) active participants.

Clarification:

Caller-run organizations are not, by definition, considered ineligible for Full Membership. Such organizations may qualify for Full Membership if they demonstrate that they operate for community benefit, do not distribute profits, and otherwise meet the requirements for Full Membership.

The Board of Directors shall have the authority to determine the appropriate classification of membership based on the organization's structure, purpose, and operation.

Old Article 3, Membership, Section 3. Membership Application and Acceptance

a. Except as described in Section 3.c of this Article, applicants for Full, Associate, or Affiliate Membership shall submit a written application together with a copy of their governing bylaws to the Board of Directors at least 60 days prior to the annual Delegates Meeting.

New Article 3, Membership, Section 3. Membership Application and Acceptance

a. Except as described in Section 3.c of this Article, organizations seeking Full, Associate, or Affiliate Membership must submit a written request to join the IAGSDC describing their calling practices, including frequency of dances, estimated number of dancers, and caller(s), and indicating their relationship to the LGBTQ+ square dance community. If available, governing bylaws should be included. Requests must be received at least sixty (60) days prior to a Delegates Meeting at which they will be considered, and the Board of Directors shall determine the appropriate class of membership.

Old Article 4, Section 3 – Voting

b. The Delegate, or in their absence the Alternate Delegate, of each Member Organization in good standing, shall be entitled to cast one vote with respect to those matters submitted to the Delegate Body for action or approval. There shall not be any voting of Member Organizations by proxy. Votes may be taken by voice, by a show of hands, by written ballot, or by any reasonable electronic facsimile of the foregoing. Delegates shall have no right to cumulate their votes.

New Article 4, Section 3 – Voting

b. The Delegate, or in their absence the Alternate Delegate, of each Full Member Organization in good standing, shall be entitled to cast one vote with respect to those matters submitted to the Delegate Body for action or approval. Associate Member Organizations and Affiliate Member Organizations shall be non-voting members of the Delegate Body. There shall not be any voting of Member Organizations by proxy. Votes may be taken by voice, by a show of hands, by written ballot, or by any reasonable electronic facsimile of the foregoing. Delegates shall have no right to cumulate their votes.

Caller Liaison Committee Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – July 21, 2026

The information below is accurate as of July 19, 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 August 2026 through April 2028.

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 – 9:00 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 23, 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, May 8, 2027 – Mainstream and Plus – Dan Koft **Wheel Around NJ St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 200 Main Street, Chatham, NJ 07928 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm**

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, October 16, 2027 - 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 Brian Jarvis

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) Both Betsy Gotta and Mark Franks are ready to start classes on September 22, 2026. Each of them has been notified of the classes and workshops that the board decided upon at the June 21 meeting.
- 2) Mark has notified the committee that he will be out on three dates during the class year, October 13, 2026, December 1, 2026, and March 23, 2027. A replacement for the first two dates has been hired. The third date is for the CallerLab convention, and we will need to find a replacement for both callers on that date as Betsy will also be attending the CallerLab convention.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rutkowski

Linda Bourdet

Dave Blatt