

Minutes from the Independence Squares Annual Meeting of Members June 2nd, 2026, at 7:00 PM via Zoom

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

Total Participants: 35

Number of Voters Needed for a Quorum: 23

Outgoing President's Remarks

Steve noted that the club has a lot to be proud of, such as our amazing volunteers, our committees, our joint dances with our sister clubs, and our active membership. He expressed his appreciation for the members of the outgoing Board, especially those who are stepping down this year. He encouraged club members to get involved with committees and attend Board meetings.

Elections

Voting began at 7:23 PM. Jed introduced the proposed changes to the bylaws, and there was time for discussion. After an informal poll, judged by Peg, it was found that a majority of voters opposed the wording of the suggested mission statement, and the mission statement was struck from Proposal #1. Voting closed at 8:15 PM.

Treasurer's Report

Cindy delivered the Treasurer's Report. The club's total bank balance increased by almost \$6,000 this fiscal year. Cindy noted that despite the loss of revenue from reducing the cost of admission on Tuesday nights, the club is in a very strong financial situation thanks to everyone who supports the club. There are currently 71 club members, including both paid members and new Mainstream graduates.

Fly-In Report

Ron submitted the written report. Mary Kay went over the report verbally. The 2026 Fly-In was highly successful with a profit of more than \$8,000 and 184 attendees. Contracts with the Sheraton have been signed for 2027 and 2028.

HASP Committee Report

Linda gave the HASP Committee's report. The committee went on hiatus starting this April, but they will reconvene if any pressing need arises, and they retain a budget for any necessary expenses. Linda talked about the history of the HASP Committee since its creation as the Return

to Dance Committee during the COVID-19 lockdown. She thanked the original members of the Return to Dance Committee and current members of the HASP Committee for their hard work.

Welcoming Trans and Nonbinary Dancers

Sarah spoke about the importance of creating a welcoming environment for trans and nonbinary dancers and gave examples of how to use the singular *they*.

Election Results

Minutes from the 2025 annual meeting: Accepted

Bylaws Proposal #1: Rejected

Bylaws Proposal #2: Accepted

The following club members were elected to the Board:

President: Mike R.

President-Elect: Steve D.

Secretary: Linda B.

Publicity & Communications Coordinator: Chris D.

Mainstream/Plus Class Representative: Suzanne D. & Helena G. (jointly)

Advanced/Challenge Class Representative: Dave T.

Katherine C. and Cindy K. will continue to serve the second half of their term as Treasurer.

Volunteer of the Year

Mike presented this year's Volunteer of the Year award to Steve. The rest of the Board voted to give Steve the award without his knowledge.

Incoming President's Remarks

Mike spoke about wanting to build on previous year's successes and continue to grow the club. One of his goals is to add more opportunities to dance. He encouraged members to attend events at the other square dance clubs in our area. He also talked about upcoming events like the Open Houses and the Pride dance and encouraged members to come to committee and Board meetings.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 PM. The new Board members stayed on the call to have a short meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah
Secretary, Independence Squares

Proposals from the Bylaws Committee

Jed, Dave T., and Sarah

Bylaws are intended to be a living document that reflects the evolution of The Organization. We had received a number of suggestions for updating and amending the bylaws and have chosen to focus on the ones presented below for this year, which have been endorsed by the Board. We welcome your feedback and are keeping a list of all suggestions to be considered for the next round of updates.

Proposal #1:

Make the following changes to Article I through Article IX:

- Add the following club mission statement: “Independence Squares is dedicated to promoting Modern Western Square Dancing while enhancing the image of LGBTQ+ people.”
- Update the description of the President-Elect role to remove the phrase “Shall be responsible for overseeing publicity related to special events” and clarify wording.
- Update the description of the Treasurer.
- Update the description of the Communications Coordinator.
- Update the section on Appointment and Terms of Chairpersons and Members to add the sentence “Members may join committees at the pleasure of the Chair.”

Rationale:

A mission statement was added to reflect the club’s identity as a gay square dancing club. The sections on the President-Elect, the Treasurer, the Communications Coordinator, the Appointment and Terms of Chairpersons and Members were re-written with suggestions from current members of the Board to better reflect the club’s actual practices. Other small changes to wording were made for clarity and brevity.

Proposal #2:

Make the following changes to Article X – Callers:

- Define Professional Club Callers as an established and appropriately licensed caller who is paid by the club for a class or other event.
- Prohibit anyone from working for the club as a Professional Club Caller and serving on the Board at the same time.
- Require that former Professional Club Callers who wish to serve on the Board recuse themselves from decisions pertaining to callers.
- Require that the significant others of Professional Club Callers recuse themselves from decisions pertaining to callers.
- Remove the designation of Shadow Caller and define Apprentice Caller as any caller who wishes to gain experience by calling for Independence Squares without being paid, regardless of whether they are being paid by other clubs.
- Allow Board members to be Apprentice Callers but require them to recuse themselves from decisions pertaining to callers.

Rationale:

The categories of Apprentice Caller and Shadow Caller were combined into one category to make the rules simpler and easier to understand. Any caller who is being paid by the club would be prohibited from also serving on the Board to prevent conflicts of interest. Apprentice Callers and callers who were hired by the club in the past would be allowed to serve on the Board so that the club can benefit from their expertise, but they would be required to recuse themselves from caller-related decisions to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Treasurer's Report

Activity from June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026

- We began our fiscal year on June 1, 2025 with a total available bank balance of \$52,793.12 and we ended our fiscal year on May 31, 2026 with a total available bank balance of \$58,791.21. That's a net increase of \$5,998.09 or 11.4%.
- Our Tuesday classes brought in \$6,775.00 while expenses for running those classes were \$12,722.78. That's a net loss of (\$5,957.78) for the fiscal year.
- Our Club dances (not including the Fly-in) brought in \$3,214.34 while expenses for running those dances were \$4,112.98. That's a net loss of (\$898.64) for the fiscal year.
- These losses were offset by:
 - Our 2026 Fly-in brought in \$8,418.19 over expenses
 - We took in \$3,645.00 in membership dues (\$2,790.00 over the last 2 months)
 - We earned \$1,756.43 in interest for the year on our LiveOak Savings and CD accounts

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Cheetham and Cindy Konecko

Co-Treasurers

June 2, 2026

Independence Squares Fly-In Committee Report

June 2, 2026

2026 Fly-In wrap up

The financial numbers for the 2026 Fly-In have been finalized.

- Net income before 50/50 and basket sales: \$4136.19
- 50/50 income: \$832.00
- Basket income: \$3450.00
- Total Fly-In income: \$8418.19
- We had 152 preregistered dancers and 32 walk-in dancers, for a total attendance of 184.

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

As approved by the board, an amended contract with the Sheraton Bucks County Hotel which increases our room block and codifies the terms of the bar, has been signed by all parties.

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

As approved by the board, a contract with the Sheraton Bucks County Hotel has been signed for our 2028 Fly-In.

Miscellaneous

A new Fly-In role has been created to handle most advertising functions. Eric has agreed to take on that responsibility. If any club member has suggestions regarding advertising or promotion, please reach out to Eric.

Any club member who wishes to become part of our Fly-In committee is invited to reach out to any of the committee co-chairs (Mary Kay, Vinney, or Ron). We typically meet once a month, via Zoom, from September or October through the month of the Fly-In.

Respectfully submitted
Mary Kay, Vinney, and Ron
Fly-In Co-chairs

June 2, 2026

HASP Committee Report for the Annual Meeting

Hi everybody. I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the work that the Health and Safety Protocols (HASP) committee has accomplished over the past 5-6 years. HASP went into hiatus in April 2026 as there were no pressing issues to discuss regularly as a committee.

In March 2025, HASP sent a newsletter to the IS community about the history and focus and future of HASP. Here is a summary:

When the COVID pandemic started, back in the early days of 2020, many places shut down to help prevent the spread of the COVID virus, including Independence Squares. A committee was started to monitor COVID and to ascertain when it would be safe to come back together in person. It was called the Return to Dance Committee (RTD) and was led by Ron Rumble. The committee collected data from 11 counties on COVID transmission rates, hospitalizations, vaccinations, and death rates to inform their recommendations.

Once it was deemed safe to dance in person again, the club instituted some precautions, such as requiring the use of face masks, keeping up to date with vaccinations and checking vaccination cards, and using hand sanitizers. In 2023, RTD recommended that IS encourage mask wearing but stop requiring it to attend our classes and dances; in addition, they recommended -that IS no longer require dancers to show proof of current vaccination status.

Over time, the RDT committee evolved as circumstances changed and became the Health and Safety Protocols Committee (HASP) in March 2023.

Some of the initiatives from HASP included:

- Coordinating a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid class run by Red Cross.
- Providing a first aid kit available every week at our classes.
- Providing face masks and hand sanitizers at all of our events.
- Using high efficiency particulate arresting filter (HEPA) air purifiers in each of the dance rooms for classes to help reduce airborne contaminants including viruses.

The HASP committee always worked with consensus among its members and with the larger IS community. We based our recommendations to the IS board based on data drawn from reputable

news sources and trustworthy medical information providers. Once the World Health Organization declared the end to the public health emergency of COVID in May 2023, we saw ourselves as a resource of information and data on broader health and safety issues so that people could be informed and empowered to make health decisions for themselves, in consultation with their health care providers.

Now that HASP is on hiatus, I want to take a moment to thank those who contributed their energy, expertise, and points of view to our discussions and recommendations.

First, thank you to Ron Rumble and the initial Return to Dance Committee who looked out for all of us when we wanted to dance together in person, but it was just not safe to do so. They kept us informed and up-to-date with the latest data, and when we could do so safely, we were able to dance together again, albeit with masks on!

When the committee evolved to the Health and Safety Committee (thanks to Peg for the re-naming to reflect the broader focus), we had these members:

Peg, Linda, Mary Kay & Bob Rohde, Vinney, Mike & Tim, Eileen, and Helena. Each member brought their own unique perspective, such as data collection and analysis, medical and scientific understanding, bringing awareness of the social impact of living within the COVID epidemic, and keeping us on point and on target without losing focus.

It has been a valuable and enriching experience to work with all these people and make a solid contribution to the IS and larger square dance community. Thank you to all.

Linda

Chair, HASP Committee