Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting

Start of meeting: Tuesday August 25, 2026 7:07 pm

Board Members Present
Chris Deephouse – Communication Coordinator
Cindy Konecko – Co-Treasurer
David Tavani – Advanced / Challenge Class Representative
Helena Gallant – Mainstream / Plus Class Co-Representative
Katherine Cheetham -- Co-Treasurer
Linda Bourdet -- Secretary
Michael Rutkowski -- President
Steve Demos – President Elect
Suzanne Datto – Mainstream / Plus Class Co-Representative

Guest Present
Will Hamp

Archives
Mike has boxes of archival Independence Squares materials, such as board meeting minutes and old newsletters, that he is reviewing and scanning. He plans to work on the history of Independence Squares and plans to make some of it available to the IAGSDC Historical Archive.

Minutes

> Motion Cindy made a motion to accept as written the minutes for the June and July Board Meetings. Chris seconded the motion; motion carried.

Minutes from the IS 2026 Annual Meeting were received; motion to approve will occur at 2027 annual meeting. Steve will post the minutes on the IS web page.

Treasurer's Report

CDs
At PNC, interest rate for IS savings account fell to 2.85%, and PNC's CD rates were better than that. Treasurer moved $10,000 into a 6-month CD at 3.9%, maturity date in January 2027, and moved $20,000 into a one-year CD at 4.1% with a maturity date of July 2027. That leaves in the savings account $24,910.90.

Signatories for PNC Account
All those with signatory responsibilities have successfully completed PNC's requirements.

PNC Credit Card
Discussion was held on opening a PNC no-fee credit card for IS use.

> Motion Mike made a motion to approve IS pursuing getting a PNC credit card for IS use. Dave seconded; motion carried.

Summer Splash
It was a very successful dance. There were 82 dancers in attendance. Proceeds will be shared between Independence Squares, Chesapeake Squares and DC Lambda Squares.

Caller Liaison Committee Report

Guest Callers
Mike reported that all upcoming absences by Mark Franks and Betsy Gotta have been filled with callers.

Apprentice Caller
Steve formally requested the board to consider his application to be an apprentice caller, and then recused himself from this discussion, as required by the IS bylaws. Discussion was held.

Motion Mike made a motion to accept Steve as apprentice caller; seconded by Chris; motion carried.

Steve returned to the meeting.

Arch Street Meeting House
Mike reported that Dayle Hodge will be calling for Busy Bs in July 2027. We should consider seeing if we can hire him for the Tuesday prior to his Busy Bs engagement. Steve will check with the Arch Street Meeting House to see if their facility would be available, and what the cost would be.

Recruitment Committee Report

Proposals
Steve presented two proposals:

(1) A tip at annual graduation before diplomas are presented for newly graduated dancers and their family and friends.
(2) At start of classes, if a member brings in a friend to start classes, then the friend would not be charged any fee for the first pre-pay period (usually 10 weeks).

- Discussion was held on the no-fee-for-friend proposal. Steve withdrew the proposal for now and will go back to the recruitment committee to think about it more for next year.
- Chris suggested an alternative: have a current member be a mentor to a new class attendee, and if the new dancer goes to the Glitter Ball, then the mentor would not have to pay a fee to attend.

Square Dance Demo in Media
IS presented a square dance demo at the Media Dining Under the Stars event in July. The event was successful with two squares comprised of experienced dancers and new dancers. Steve did well with calling / teaching. Info for upcoming open houses was distributed.

Facilities

Using Mertz Hall
Steve and Sarah met with Joe, administer of the Church where we hold classes each week with concerns about the continuing difficulties with dancing on the broken floor in St Johns Chapel. Since we have a contract for using 2 rooms each week, Joe said he thought we could use Mertz Hall with no additional fee instead of St Johns Chapel as long as Mertz Hall is not in use by

another community group. This switch would have to be approved by the facilities committee of the Church. Steve will continue to work with the Church on this switch.

Bathroom signs

Steve asked Joe, the church administrator, if we could change the signs on the two bathrooms from reading Men or Women and instead list the facilities in each room: 2 urinals and 1 stall in one room, and 3 stalls in the other room. Joe said if we did add the signs, they could be in use only during the times we are using the space and would have to be removed. Discussion was held and it was decided to table this idea for now.

Merion Friends Meeting House for Glitter Ball

Steve reported that the cost to rent the Merion Friends Meeting House for 2026 Glitter Ball would be $500 and would rise to $650 for 2027. Supporting documentation was shared that informed the board that the Meeting house plans to undergo major renovations and this likely influenced their rise in fees. Discussion was held that we need to consider alternatives for our Glitter Ball.

Hand Sanitizer

Linda will pick up small hand sanitizer containers at the open house on Sept 8, empty them, clean them, and refill with fresh hand sanitizer in time for classes beginning in September.

Community Guidelines

"Resolution of Our Issues"

Cindy brought up "Resolution of Our Issues" document and opened discussion on the section on the members of the board and their response if some kind of problematic behavior between dancers occurs. It was resolved that if an issue arises, the class representatives will be the first line of contact and will encourage the people to come to them. Some possible steps could include talk with everybody involved, better understand the situation, and work to achieve an amenable solution amongst the parties involved.

Availability

This document, the Community Guideline, once approved, will be available and on display each week at class for all dancers to see.

Incident Email

It was suggested that we set up an email address where someone could report an incident. The president or president-elect would monitor this email account.

Dance Etiquette and Safe Dancing

It was suggested that we offer a separate document on how to dance without hurting each other physically. Mike referred to an article by Ed Foote on square dance etiquette.

Publicity Committee Report

Schedule

- Chris posted the Fall 2026 dance class / workshop schedule on the IS web page.
- Busy Bs is posting our dance schedule on their web page.

Social Event

- A social outing is planned for August 28 to visit the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Advanced / Challenge Representative Report
Dave asked for a list of the names and email addresses of the dancers who will be in the advanced class in Fall 2026 session.

Mainstream / Plus Representative Report
Nothing to report until the start of classes Fall 2026 session.

Board Position Responsibilities
Discussion was opened on the responsibilities various board jobs, especially those of the Communication Director and the Secretary.

It was decided that these are the responsibilities:
Secretary
- Manage the minutes of board meetings
- Send club membership communications

Communications Coordinator
- Publicity
- Cross-posting with other clubs
- Website updates
- Managing MailChimp (or Constant Contact or an alternative)

Steve, Marika, and Arin
- Handle social media

Class Representatives
- Tuesday class communications

Committee Chairs
- Committee communications

GMail account and all of our Google Groups and Zoom
- Specific responsibility for these areas was not assigned to a particular board member or committee member

Emergency Communication
- In the event of a weather (or other) emergency and classes for the evening would have to be cancelled, the President, President-Elect, or Caller Liaison would be in charge of notifying members.

Old Business
List of Members
Cindy has a list of IS members, past and present, as indicated on the IAGSDC membership. She did an audit of those who are not currently members and are not up-to-date on paying their

membership dues. Their names will be listed as inactivated on the IAGSDC list, and can be re-activated if they come back and pay up membership. No names will be deleted.

Next Board Meetings
September 23, 2026 7:00 pm
October 21, 2026 5:00 pm
November 2026 No Board Meeting

Adjournment
Motion
Linda made motion to adjourn; seconded by Cindy; motion carried.
Meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Committee Reports

IS Communications Report - 08/25/2026
Communications Report

- The Fall Class Schedule is on our website. I will send it to our GMail group this week.
- The graphic and other information can be used for Social Media posts.
- The invitation to the Philadelphia Museum of Art event this Saturday is posted. Email Steve Demos if you are thinking of attending.

Secretary & Communications Coordinator Areas of Responsibility
Linda Bourdet and I have noted that the bylaws assign responsibility for **Internal Communications** to the Secretary and the Communications Coordinator.

To address this overlap, I have been thinking about the following idea:

The Secretary has responsibility for:

- Club Membership communications
- Tuesday class communications
- Volunteer committee communications
- Our GMail account and all of our Google Groups
- Zoom

The Communications Coordinator has responsibility for:

- Weekend dance publicity, including flyers
- Non-dance publicity (Phillies Pride, Art Museum etc).
- Cross posting with other clubs
- All website updates
- MailChimp (or Constant Contact or an alternative)

Steve and Marika would continue to handle social media.

Your reactions to this idea are welcome. Open questions:

- How do we continue to support the Fly-in Committee?

Treasurers' Report for Board meeting on 8/25/2026:

- The available balance across all accounts as of 7/31/2026 was $58,674.82.

- After the first two months of the fiscal year, as of 7/31/2026, total income was $1,215.39 and total expenses were $1,473.94 for a net deficit of ($258.55).

- For the month of July total income was $558.91 from:
  - July dance
  - Donation
  - Membership dues
  - Interest income

- For the month of July total expenses were $708.58 from:
  - Hall rental
  - Caller fees
  - Storage unit
  - PayPal fees
  - Insurance
  - Outreach and Recruiting

- Total Club member count as of July 31st was 75

- On July 13th, with approval from the Finance Committee, we established two CDs at LiveOak Bank with funds from our LiveOak Savings account. We took this action because, sometime in June, the annual interest rate on our LiveOak Savings account fell from 3.8% to 2.85% and interest rates on the LiveOak CDs were more favorable. Here is what we established:

  - 6-month CD: Amount = $10,000
  - Annual Percentage Yield = 3.9%
  - Maturity Date = 1/13/2027

  - 1-year CD: Amount = $20,000
  - Annual Percentage Yield = 4.10%
  - Maturity Date = 7/13/2027

  - After funding the CD's the LiveOak Savings account balance as of 7/31/2026 was: $24,910.90.

- The Finance Committee (Mike, Steve, Katherine, Cindy and Dave) met in person at the PNC branch in Collingswood, NJ to establish Mike Rutkowski and Dave Tavani as additional check signers for the Club's PNC checking account. During that time it was agreed that we would pursue a PNC credit card for the Club if approved by the full board. It would be used for appropriate Club expenses (e.g., approved online

purchases, recurring monthly payments like social media fees during recruitment season). This would alleviate the need to reimburse club members for these approved expenses.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Cheetham
Cindy Konecko
Co-Treasurers

Caller Liaison Committee Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – August 25, 2026

The information below is accurate as of August 24, 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 September 2026 through April 2028.

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 Franks has notified the committee that he will be out on three dates during the class year:

   October 13, 2026 – David Hartman will substitute
   December 1, 2026 – Dayle Hodge will substitute
   March 23, 2027 - The third date is for the CallerLab convention – Brian Jarvis and Kent Forrester will substitute for Betsy and Mark.

   In addition to the March 23, 2027 date for the CallerLab convention, Betsy Gotta will also be out on January 26, 2027. Dayle Hodge will substitute.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rutkowski

Linda Bourdet

Dave Blatt

Report from the Independence Squares Recruitment Meeting – July 30, 2026

Arin, Chris, George, Helena, Marika, Sarah, Steve, Vinney and Will are on the committee.
Arin, Chris, Marika, Sarah, Steve, Vinney were at the meeting.

The first open house went well. Chris reported that a group of students [sic] alumnae from a girl's school are expected at the next one on September 8. Steve and Chris will send out a reminder to our MailChimp email list about the next open house.

Steve will contact the Rail Park group about doing a square dance demo next year. Chris suggested doing a demo at West Philly Porchfest next year. We would need a resident to allow us to perform in front of their porch. Chris will contact Gabe and/or Kellie and Ariel about their locations or those of their friends. Marika suggested working with Galaei to do a Square Dancing 101 Workshop next year. We will explore this idea further in 2027.

Arin and Marika reported on the efficacy of the advertising for the open house on Instagram. One statistic is that of all 1400 people who saw our Instagram post because of the ad (which cost us $30) 46 of them liked the post, 9 of them shared the post and 6 of them saved it.

Zoom's AI generated the following next steps from the meeting.

Next Steps

1. Steve: Contact the Rail Park organization about doing a demo next summer, after hearing back from Mike.
2. Chris: Look into West Philly Porch Fest for next year, starting in late winter or early spring, and explore using the members' directory to find contacts.
3. Steve: Send a text or email to Arin and Marika (and include Chris) with photos from events for use on Instagram and other platforms.
4. Steve: Work with Sarah to find and organize the best photos in one place.
5. Arin: Boost the Instagram post for the September 8th open house and the first night of lessons, spending about $30 each.
6. Chris: Follow up with Philly Gay Calendar about the September 8th open house listing.
7. Chris and Steve: Work on a MailChimp mailing for the broader membership about the open house.
8. Steve: Send out a Doodle poll for an early October committee meeting to include George and Will.
9. Steve: Write a report for the board about the committee's activities.
10. Committee: Meet in early October to make a recommendation for next year's open houses (number and timing) to Mike, the Caller Liaison Committee, and the board.

From our previous Recruitment Committee meeting the board has not yet addressed these proposals.

- We recommend that at our graduation dance in May 2027, we have a beginners tip right before the awarding of diplomas during which we would encourage the friends and family of graduates to participate.
- We recommend that if a member prepays for the first several weeks of Tuesday nights in September, that prepayment will not only cover the member but also a new dancer (presumably a friend of the member).

At the open houses, Steve (or someone else) will say the following. It will also be posted.

> "At Independence Squares, we want everyone to feel at home. Since everyone's needs are unique, you might occasionally run into a challenge or barrier during our events. If that happens, we'd love to hear from you so we can work together to ensure you have the best experience possible."