Minutes from the Independence Squares Board Meeting

Start of meeting: Wednesday September 23, 2026 7:13 pm

Board Members Present

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

Guests Present

Arin Barth
Ron Rumble
Sarah Paulos
Will Hamp

Opening statement

Mike Rutkowski: We are not here to solve world peace, we are here just to promote square dancing.

Minutes

Motion Chris made a motion to accept the Minutes from August 2026 Board meeting. Motion was seconded by Steve. Motion was carried.

Posting Steve will post minutes to Google Drive.

Treasurer's Report

- Treasurer's Report is attached at the end of this document.
- Cindy has a list of Mainstream class members.
- Dancers' insurance for new class members will be in effect after 4 weeks of class attendance.
- Games of chance licensing was looked into for Bucks County and Montgomery County to cover our Glitter Ball and Fly-In.

Publicity

- MailChimp: we need to decide if we want to keep this long-term or change.
- New photo for IS website is needed.

Caller Liaison Report

Caller Liaison Report is attached to the end of this document.

Current Mainstream Class Program and Progress

- Discussion was held on whether the combo dances in early 2027 should be tailored for the current Mainstream class progress up to that point. Discussion on ongoing.
- Glitter Ball in December 2026 will include tips for current Mainstream class members.
    - Chris will update the IS website to indicate this.
- Discussion was held on whether the Fly-in in April 2027 should be tailored for the current Mainstream class progress up to that point.
    - Discussion whether the current MS class members should be encouraged to attend the 2027 Fly-In

Facilities

Facilities Report is attached to the end of this document.

Arch Street Meetinghouse

Steve and Sarah are in negotiation with the Arch Street Meetinghouse for July 2027 dance. The Meeting House plans to increase their fee for us to $560 in 2027; fee was $280 in 2025.

2111 Sansom Street

Church will let us use Mertz Hall as second dance hall for no additional fees.

Post Office Box

Post office branch where IS rents its post office box is closing. We can keep the same PO box number and will have to pick up mail from a Post Office in Center City.

Merion Meetinghouse

- Glitter Ball December 2026 should not be impacted by renovations planned by Merion Meetinghouse
- Glitter Ball December 2027 is not yet confirmed until Merion Meetinghouse receives a 50% deposit.
    - If any of us locates a suitable venue for less than $650, we should let Facilities Committee know about it and they will look into it. We might switch from using the Merion Meetinghouse because of costs and renovation schedule.
    - Alternatives were discussed.

Summer Splash

- Person that was responsible for managing the space we use for Summer Splash in Newark, Delaware will be replaced by a new person. Steve will talk with them about our needs for 2027.
- We don’t yet know what the fee will be for us for Summer Splash 2027.

Trans- and Non-Binary meeting at IAGSDC 2026 convention Report

- Report is attached to the end of this document.
- Sarah and Steve attended this meeting and opened discussion. They want our input before they make proposals to the board. Committee report is attached at the end of this document.

Fly-In Report

- Fly-In Report is attached to the end of this document.
- Ron reviewed details on the 2026 Fly-In and plans for 2027, 2028, and 2029 Fly-Ins.
- Discussions were held on several topics:
    - Schedule and programming based on equal time slots for all programs being offered, or times slots based on how many dancers are registered who indicated a preferred dance program.
    - Adding 4th caller to schedule
    - Adding another dance hall to the Fly-In
    - Themes for 2028
    - Dates for 2029 due to possible conflicts in dates with Pass the Ocean Hon, WASCA, MACA, and Callerlab.
    - Callers being considered for 2029.
    - Small games of chance license will be continued for 2027 Fly-In.
- **Tee Shirts**
    - Ron said that we could order 100 tee shirts and have people wear them to advertise 2027 Fly-In.
    - Cost would be $532.08 and 15% discount and we would sell them at $5.00 each.
    - The design that was used for the 2027 Fly-In flyer would be used for the tee shirts.
- **Motion** Mike made a motion to increase the Fly-In budget to pay for the tee shirts. Motion was seconded by Dave. Motion was carried.

Mainstream and Plus Report

- Suzanne and Helena reported that the new mainstream dancers are doing well.
- Suzanne will not be present for several classes because she will be having knee replacement surgery. Helena plans to be in attendance.

Advanced and Challenge Report

- Dave reported that there are 3 new dancers in the Advanced class with 2 people who are returning for another session of Advanced lessons.
- Challenge1 started strong.
- Dave will send weekly emails on what calls were covered and what calls will be taught in that week's class, along with a reminder of which classes/workshops will be held each week.

Recruitment Report

Committee plans to meet on October 14 to plan open houses for 2027.

Community Guidelines

- Community Guidelines Committee, consisting of Steve Demos, Chris Deephouse, Will Hamp and Cindy Konecko, amended the document to note that the Class Representatives are to be identified as people a class attendee can go to if there is a problem.
- Feedback on the use of the word “repercussions” was accepted and document was amended by the Community Guidelines Committee.
- Committee plans to make the Community Guidelines document pithy and set a positive tone.
- Committee plans to focus on emotional interfaces rather than mechanical interactions, such as too-tight or gripping hand-holds or not physically hurting other dancers in our squares.

Next Board Meetings

October 21, 2026 5:00 pm
There will be no Board Meeting November 2026

Adjournment

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

Committee Reports

Verbal committee reports were submitted from these committees:

- Advanced and Challenge Class Representative Report
- Community Guidelines
- Mainstream and Plus Class Representatives
- Publicity
- Recruitment

Treasurers' Report for Board meeting on 9/23/2026

- As of 8/31/2026, the total available balance across all accounts was $59,476.51, an increase of $801.69 from the previous month's ending balance.

- For the month of August total income was $1,232.65 from the following sources:
    - Summer Splash dance admission fees
    - Summer Splash 50/50 proceeds
    - Interest income

- For the month of August total expenses were $375.00 from the following sources:

- Caller fees
- PayPal fees

- Total Club member count as of August 31st remains 75

- Summer Splash 2026 review:
  - Summer Splash is co-sponsored by Chesapeake Squares, DC Lambda Squares, and Independence Squares. The three clubs split the dance space rental, caller fee, advertising costs, and proceeds equally. Independence Squares alone covers PayPal fees for dancers using that payment method ($0.96) and the shortfall from reduced admission fees for IS dancers ($15.00).
  - We had a total of 82 attendees.
  - 50/50 proceeds were $268.00.
  - After taking all income and expenses into consideration, our cosponsoring clubs each realized a profit of $166.94, and Independence Squares realized a profit of $150.98 for Summer Splash 2026.
  - Counts of attendees by Club are as follows:

Club	**Total**
Independence Squares	28
Chesapeake Squares	16
DCLS	16
Busy Bees	6
Club Sashay	2
Ridge Runners	2
South Florida Mustangs	2
Suncoast Squares	2
Windmill Squares	2
2x4s	1
Belair Squares	1
Four County	1
Jeff French - W?&D ???	1
Tom Thumb	1
Time Squares	1
Total	82

- PNC approved Independence Squares for a no-annual-fee business credit card. The bank required a person be associated with the credit card account in addition to the organization. Cindy Konecko is acting in that capacity. As mentioned last month, the credit card will be

used for appropriate Club expenses (e.g., approved online purchases, recurring monthly payments like social media fees during recruitment season).

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Konecko

Katherine Cheetham

Co-Treasurers

Caller Liaison Committee Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – September 23, 2026

The information below is accurate as of September 22, 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.

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 Facilities Committee For the Board Meeting on October 21st, 2026

Last meeting: October 13th, 2026
Committee members present: Sarah, Steve

Sarah contacted the Arch Street Meeting House about renting their East Room for a dance on July 20th, 2027. She learned that they have instated a new policy of not renting the East Room to dance groups. Arch Street offered to rent us a smaller room on the second floor instead. The listed price for the room, including nonprofit discount, is $80 per hour. Sarah told her contact she would let them know whether the board would like to rent the upstairs room.

Recommendation: We do not recommend renting from the Arch Street Meeting House for the July 20th, 2027 dance.

On October 13th, Steve and Sarah toured two available rental spaces at Friends Select School at 17th and Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Both rooms are air conditioned, elevator accessible, and would suit our needs well. There will not be on-site parking available on July 20th, 2027, due to construction, but there is street parking and a public garage within a few blocks. Friends Select offered a price of $300 for the evening. We asked them to hold a room for us on July 20th, pending board approval.

Recommendation: We recommend renting a room at Friends Select School for the dance on July 20th, 2027.

Steve reserved the Red Cross Room for the following Saturdays in 2027:

January 23	6pm to 10pm
February 13	2pm to 6pm
March 13	2pm to 10pm
June 12	6pm to 10pm
October 16	2pm to 10pm

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah

Report on the meeting at the IAGSDC convention exploring meeting the needs of our trans and non-binary dancers.

Sarah and Steve attended this meeting in Montreal. Thom Dang facilitated the discussion. Sarah and Steve found the effort worthwhile and useful.

Various perspectives were presented about using non-gendered terms for the dancer who is standing on the right of the couple when we square up or the dancer standing on the left. Some people felt we need to tackle bigger issues about inclusivity and that vocabulary for dancer roles is secondary.

There was broad consensus about three issues.

1. Encouraging all our dancers to wear bars on our badges that designate the dancer's pronouns (or have the badges themselves designate the pronouns) is a good idea. This club norm is supportive of trans and non-binary dancers in that it does not make it seem like only certain people are requesting an extra effort for their pronouns to be honored.
2. If a club chooses to designate bathrooms with signage other than men's room and women's room the best way to do that is to have signs on the outside of the bathrooms that denote the facilities present within. For example the sign could say "two stalls and two sinks" or "two urinals, one stall and one sink."
3. Having people in the club designated as something like a Safer Dances Coordinator (which is the terminology used at Tech Squares) is critical so that our trans and non-binary dancers know who to approach should they encounter a situation such as another dancer not being respectful about using their correct pronouns.

No attendance was taken at the meeting but several of us thought the meeting was a good start and that we should move forward with more communication. Thom mentioned that one possible avenue to do that was through an invitation-only Facebook Group for those of us concerned about these issues.

Sarah and Steve are not going to make any recommendations for our club at tonight's board meeting (though we have ideas) but rather we will invite any of you to talk with us or join us as we put together recommendations to present at a future board meeting.

Independence Squares Fly-In Committee Report October 21, 2026

The most recent Fly-In committee meeting was held on September 15, 2026, and the minutes were discussed with the board at its meeting on September 23, 2026. The next Fly-In committee meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2026. There is nothing new to report to the board at this time, other than the following:

A deadline of March 17, 2027, has been set for all final drafts of documents that will be printed for the 2027 Fly-In. If the board intends to include flyers or other materials in this order, the Fly-In committee asks that the
board ensure all such materials are delivered to Ron by that date. Documents should be emailed to ronrumble@gmail.com in PDF format and should indicate how many copies of each document to print.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron