

Meri Squares 54th Annual General Meeting
Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 8:30 pm
Westminster Church

Minutes

1. **Call to order.** The Annual General Meeting was called to order at 8:30 pm. The President, David Shackleton, welcomed everyone. He noted that the Club Constitution does not have a specified quorum for the AGM. This matter will be addressed under the agenda. There were 30 people in attendance. The current Club membership is 67 persons.
2. **Approval of the Agenda.** There being no additions or changes, David called for approval of the Agenda. Carried.
3. **Approval of the Minutes of the April 20, 2023 Annual General Meeting.** There being no additions or changes, Lamar Mason moved to approve the minutes seconded by Sandy Rosen. Carried.
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes.** – N/A
5. **Reports (Appendix B)**
 - a. **President** – David Shackleton (see President's report). David highlighted that we are not as many dancers as we were prior to covid, but congratulated the Club on the fact that we dance 2 nights a week! David highlighted the work that EOSARDA has done with the City to maintain the Not for profit rate for the city venues. In closing, David reiterated his thanks to all the Executive for their hard work behind the scenes. David then thanked all the members who work behind the scenes help the club function. Lastly David thanked our callers, John Charman and Wendy VanderMeulen.
 - b. **Past President** — Lamar Mason (see Past-President's Report). Lamar advised that she filled in wherever necessary as Past President and some duties as Vice President as this position was vacant. Lamar stated it was a case of being wherever she needed to be and provide continuity in terms of how the club operates and provide guidance to David. Lamar thanked everyone, the Executive and all and advised she would be stepping down as Past President, Lamar acknowledged that it has been a privilege to work with the team and the club. In closing Lamar stated "you always rally when we need you."

c. **Vice-President** – vacant

d. **Secretary** – Michelle Gravelle (see Secretary's report). Michelle acknowledged that her main job is to record the minutes of all meetings and that she had benefited from zoom video recordings during covid and has since continued with audio recordings. Other duties include supporting the Executive team and enjoys being Club Photographer.

e. **Treasurer** – Gerry Lelievre (see attached 3 financial reports) Gerry reviewed the Treasurer Report Summary noting the total assets (\$14,870.73). Gerry stated that income was higher than forecast due to a higher than expected number of SSD dancers in the winter session, the city maintaining the existing rental fee for Dulude Arena and significant profit from our Meri Mingle Dance. Gerry then reviewed the 2024 AGM Income-Expense Report noting a profit of (\$2,812.77) with an estimated balance April 30th of (\$9,714.57) and a GIC AT (\$5,156.16.) Combined this would be total assets of (\$14,870.73).

Gerry then moved to the 2024 AGM Yearly Financial Comparison report total expenses (\$15,123.73), net profit (\$2,812.77), and total assets to date (\$14,870.73). In response to a call from questions from the floor, Lynn Legree congratulated the Executive on maintaining the lower rate for Dulude Arena.

Gerry Lelievre moved acceptance of the Treasurer's report and financial statements. Lynn Legree seconded. Carried.

f. **Membership Coordinator** – Colleen McEwan (see Membership report). Colleen reviewed the membership numbers over the past year. There are currently 67 members.

g. **Publicity Coordinators** – Patricia McLachlan and Jacques Chesnais (see Publicity report). Pat reviewed the efforts of the Publicity Committee with special thanks to Michelle and Wendy. Pat made a pitch for someone to join as Publicity coordinator.

h. **Social Coordinators** – Laureen and Guy Quesnel (See Social Report) . Guy and Laureen thanked Jean and Brenda for ensuring kitchen needs were met and Robert for the extra décor at themed events. Laureen thanked Susan Vail and Joyce Fleury for putting forth their names for Social coordinators for SSD classes.

i. **Caller Couple** – Wendy VanderMeulen and John Charman. John advised that the Thursday Plus dancers had improved considerably and that most times we had 3 ½ to 4 squares which is pretty good! John stated to keep promoting Meri Squares as it is the only place to be! Wendy advised that she was happy to see all the dancers at SSD and to remember the opportunity for summer dances!

Wendy also gave a thanks to all the plus angels who regularly turn out to support the SSD group.

j. **Member at Large** – vacant

A question was asked about what does Member at Large mean. David provided some background information on why the position existed and that we had a member who was fulfilling the role but had to step down. David advised that we would be looking to have another member step forward.

David asked for a motion to approve the Officers' reports as submitted. Moved by Marilyn Collins, seconded by Lee Warriner. Carried.

6. New Business

a. **Motions to amend Article 5 and Article 6 – Election of Executive Committee and Terms of Office and General Meetings and Meetings of the Executive Committee (President)**

David provided background that the Executive reviewed the constitution and that changes were required, further stating that this is a process that happens from time to time. David read each motion and provided a brief explanation for each change.

Motion:

It is moved that Article 5.2 (b) be amended to read "All officers may serve multiple terms."

Moved by David Shackleton and seconded by Lamar Mason. Carried.

Motion

It is moved that a new Article 5.2 (c) be added to read: "While there is a one-year term of office for all positions, for the purposes of continuity, it is customary practice for the positions of President and of Vice-President to each be held for a period of two consecutive terms, with the person(s) holding the position of Vice-President moving to the position of President after the end of their two-term period" and that subsequent clauses in Article 5 be renumbered.

Moved by David Shackleton and seconded by Wayne McCormick. Carried.

Motion

It is moved that Article 6.1(c) be amended to read: “ Annual General meetings and Special General meetings shall be held on regular dance evenings and notice of such meetings shall be given to the Club members at least two weeks prior to the date of the proposed meeting.”

Moved by David Shackleton and seconded by Lee Warriner. Carried

Motion

It is moved that an article 6.1 (d) be added to read: “Quorum at Annual General Meetings and Special Meetings shall be 15 members or 25% of the membership, whichever is greater” and that subsequent clauses in Article 6 be renumbered accordingly.

Moved by David Shackleton and seconded by Christine.....Carried.

Motion

It is moved that current Article 6.1(f) be amended to read “6.1 (g) Any Annual General, Special General or Executive meeting of the Club may be held electronically to transact business and make decisions provided any necessary quorum is established and required notice has been given.”

Moved by David Shackleton and seconded by Sandy Rosen. Carried.

Motion

It is moved that Article 6.2 (c) be amended to read: “Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at regular intervals to properly carry out the business of the Club.”

Moved by David Shackleton and seconded by Lynn Legree. Carried.

b. Presentation of Slate of Officers for 2024-2025 – Past President (see attached report).

Call for nominations from the Floor: Lamar Mason opened discussion with a call to nominations from the floor noting that there were two vacant positions of social coordinator (Thursday – Plus group) and publicity coordinator. Lamar emphasised that nominations could be for any of the positions listed, regardless if a name attached to the position. Sandy Rosen put forth his name for the position of Social Coordinator.

Lamar asked for any further nominations. Seeing none, Lamar then read the amended slate of officers as follows :

The Meri Squares Executive for 2024-2025:

President: David Shackleton

Vice-President Couple: Pat McLachlan and Jacques Chesnais

Past President: vacant

Treasurer: Gerry Lelievre

Secretary: Michelle Gravelle

Membership Coordinator: Colleen McEwan

Social Coordinator SSD – Joyce Fleury and Susan Vail

Social Coordinator Plus – Sandy Rosen

Publicity Coordinator: Vacant

As there was no vote per position required, Lamar asked for acceptance of the Slate of Officers. Moved by Linda Williams and seconded by Terry Legree that The Meri Squares Executive for 2024 – 2025 be accepted. Carried.

David then acknowledged our outgoing members of the Executive and thanked them for all their hard work. Thank you for a job well done went to Lamar Mason, Past President and Guy and Laureen Quesnel as Social Coordinators.

- c. Discussion on member interest in having proxy voting for future AGM's
David opened the discussion by asking if the membership were interested in having a proxy vote. It was noted that we have never been in a position where a close vote was an issue. It was asked whether a proxy vote could help the club in terms of quorum. No one knew the immediate answer. There was general agreement that a proxy vote was not required at this time.

7. General Discussion:

David opened the floor for any discussion.

Promotion at Community Centres: It was asked if we post flyers in other community centres other than where we dance. It was noted, that yes we do. However, often the decision on what to put on these community boards is decided by their staff or management. We have seen success posting in grocery stores and libraries. Again, we stressed the importance of members posting flyers in areas they frequent. Please try!

Meetup: The discussion morphed to meetup. It was noted that we had cancelled our meet up group as it was not producing results. We gain visibility through Wendy's meet up group and have seen members of Square Dance Ottawa become members of Meri Squares. Similarly, we have been able to encourage potential members to Square Dance Ottawa who are not yet ready to make a firm weekly commitment

Donations/Contributions to local causes: Marilyn asked for it to be written into the records that Meri Squares does good work for local groups including the Snow Suit Fund and Into the Cold. Our members have been generous in cash donations and in articles of mitts/scarves for the snowsuit fund and in terms of toiletries and warm clothing for Into the Cold. Marilyn would like to see the Executive continue this good work. Noted that Into the Cold starts in November.

Coffee/Tea:

Jean raised the fact that it appears we are throwing out excess coffee/tea on Thursday nights and that it takes a lot of work to organize. Is the coffee / tea really necessary? This led to a discussion and questions on how many dancers actually drink coffee on Thursday nights? The answer was 5 and 2 people drink tea. Connie also reiterated that when she used to do the coffee it was also a lot of work and she would arrive early and leave late. Some possible options:

- Coffee on specialty nights only?
- Make few cups (current process: 12 – 15 cups; 30 dancers – 3 squares)
- Kettle and tea bags
- Purchase Kurig machine(s)
- Keep the cold water
- Keep the cookies

Tuesday night: There is coffee – we pay the catering kitchen; small pot – about 10 cups

Next steps: The Executive will discuss options in time for the next session.

Current Session fees:

Lamar asked the membership for their input on if our fees are too high given tough times. It was noted that we are one of the most expensive clubs. Most other clubs charge \$60 - \$80 per session compared to our \$130. There is one other club with a similar rate. Lamar wanted to get a sense on how dancers were feeling. Two members noted that our price is within reason to other activities. Another dancer noted that their choir membership was also increasing. If a person dances nightly, and comes to each dance, it is more expensive, the session rate would be the cheaper option. It was asked why we have a \$14,000 cushion. David advised that the term cushion was appropriate. We are now through Covid, and that we are gaining a better sense of pattern and that we may be able to discuss lowering the fee. We need \$7,000 to 8,000 annually to operate. It was noted that part of the cushion was built up during the times of 100 dancers each session paying \$50. It was also noted that should the city have increased the rental rate that this alone would have utilized our existing GIC! Also noted to dancers that for the 4 years prior to Covid; our Club lost money every year.

Next steps: The Executive will continue to consider if there is a possibility to lower fees.

SSD – what's next?

Susan raised the question on what is next for SSD dancers. Will there be Mainstream offered. David advised that there was a question asked to current SSD grads about learning mainstream and the answer was positive. Currently there is some mainstream teach for SSD Grads. A plus teach is every 3 years. There is a possibility that we have a Mainstream teach which can further allow participation in mainstream dances that are offered. We recognize that this is tough to figure out and aware that this is an issue for SSD dancers.

Next Steps: The Executive will continue to discuss options.

- 8. Adjournment.** David adjourned the meeting at 9:20 pm.

To read any of the 2024 AGM reports, please go to <https://merisquares.ca/wp/agm-reports/>