

Country Squires- Minutes of Meeting on June 11, 2026

President Don Elliott began the inaugural meeting in his role as CS president at 12 noon. Craig Stockel provided Words of Inspiration: a poem on Freedom, Perseverance and Responsibility written by Nelson Mandela.

After luncheon, the minutes of the May 14th meeting were approved unanimously.

Our guest speaker was Keith Coughlin, The Barn's Executive Director; his presentation's objective was to provide new insights of The Barn's interworking, and in particular, the recruitment process for the 15 members of the acting company. Its highlight was his interview of, and a vocal performance by, three young acting company members recruited this year.

Key takeaways:

The Barn is in its 94th performance season; the recent expansion and renovation opened new horizons for the institution's performance and educational opportunities. The support of the New London community is integral to its success and an influencing factor in recruitment.

Over 1100 candidates are considered for the 15 acting company slots via a series of road trips to audition weekends and colleges, where relationships with faculty and coaches are key.

The extremely talented young actors provided commentary on their side of the recruitment process as well as reasoning behind their acceptance of The Barn's offer.

In the Q & A, it was revealed that The Barn is New London's 3rd highest employer with over 200 on staff in season. Also, the play selection for each next season starts in August with fall licensing activity followed by winter team assembly and team creativity process in the spring.

Keith Coughlin completed his objective with the ease of an accomplished (prior?) performer.

Program Chair Dave Wood thanked the actors and the director who presented with our invaluable memento- the Country Squires coffee mug.

The meeting adjourned at 2:07PM.

By Art Scutro, Acting Secretary
6/18/2026