



**Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands  
Board Meeting Minutes  
November 2, 2023  
Virtually via Zoom**

**Committee Memebers:**

Inge Morascini, Langley Chamber, Vice Chair  
Mayor Scott Chaplin, Treasurer, City of Langley  
Bryan Stucky, Oak Harbor City Council  
Sharon Sappington, EDC  
Max Lindsay-Thorsen, South Whidbey Lodging  
Holly Grason, Coupeville Lodging  
Jessica McCready, Camano Island Chamber  
Allanah Johannsen, Camano Island Lodging  
Magi Aguilar, Oak Harbor Chamber  
Angela Muniz, Freeland Chamber  
Katie Grindon, Clinton Chamber

**Creative Team:**

Sherrye Wyatt, Embrace PR & Marketing Manager  
Scott Rosenkranz, Embrace Graphic Design & Branding  
Jack Penland, Embrace Digital Marketing/Website, Data & Content Creation  
Vicki Graham, Embrace Regenerative Places Program

**Guests:**

Emily Wandres, Contractor  
Marie Shimada, Ebey's Landing  
Mark Renthrow, Administrator, City of Langley  
Krista Loercher, Whidbey Island Kayaking

**Call to Order:** Vice Chair Inge Morascini called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. and established that there was a quorum.

**Adoption of Agenda:**

Vice Chair Inge Morascini asked if there were any changes or additions to the November 2 Agenda. There being none, Mayor Scott Chaplin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Jessic McCready seconded, the board approved, and the motion passed.

**Approval October 5 Meeting Minutes**

Vice Chair Inge Morascini asked the Board if there were any changes to the October 5 meeting minutes, there being none, Jessica McCready made a motion to approve the October 5 meeting minutes as presented, Mayor Scott Chaplin seconded, the Board approved and the motion passed.

**Public Comment:**

Vice Chair Inge Morascini asked if there was anyone from the public present who wished to make a comment. No one responded.

**Approval of Two Batches of Invoices**

Vice Chair Inge Morascini asked if there were any questions on the Invoices as presented, which included two batches: October 23 - \$50,293.38 and October 20 - \$3,670.92. There being no questions, Jessica McCready made a motion to approve the Invoices, Mayor Scot Chaplin seconded, and the Board approved to accept the invoices as presented and the motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report**

There was no Treasurers Report.

**Business Report**

Vice Chair Inge Morascini noted that the RFPs for seven contractual positions are currently live on the website and being advertised in local newspapers and online. Proposals will be accepted until November 27 at 12 noon PST.

She also noted that the City of Oak Harbor had submitted Amendment No. 4 to the Interlocal Agreement to increase their annual contribution from \$20,000 to \$50,000. The amendment was distributed to the committee prior to the meeting. The officers met on Monday and recommended that because there are a few other changes that may need to be made to the Interlocal Agreement, that all of the corrections should be approved at the same time, rather than open up the Interlocal twice.

**Creative Team**

(full report included in Board Packet)

Sherrye Wyatt gave a Year-to-Date slide presentation by Erin Osborne, owner of Osborne Northwest Public Relations who is contracted with Embrace to oversee media relations. Full coverage report is linked [here](#). Some highlights....

- Analysis: Fewer pieces of coverage, more engaging and higher reach, larger audience. Reach of 1.89 billion estimated views 236,000 total engagements; likes, comments and shares across social media. 163 pieces of coverage with a domain rank of 59. 2022
- Metrics for reference: 16.9 million estimated views; 163,000 total engagements; 547 pieces of earned media, with an average domain authority of 55.
- Committee members on the call who've had interaction with press trips that Erin and Sherrye have arranged spoke of their experience and the resulting media coverage.
- Committee members were asked to share intriguing stories, regenerative experiences and compelling characters from their communities with Erin for consideration in 2024.

Sherrye also reported on the State of Washington Conference where Embrace won the prestigious Destination Stewardship award, and she spoke on a responsible tourism panel.

Jack Penland touched on data in his monthly report and asked that committee members be sure to look at the STR data. Marie Shimada as pillar ambassador for Bridge Building gave an update on "Be Our Guest" a lodging industry meet and greet on October 17. There were 65 RSVPs and about 50 attendees. Those on the committee meeting call who attended provided positive feedback.

Vicki Graham reported that she is communicating with various community members including the new pillar ambassador for Healthy Nature Jen Schmitz. She also asked the committee if an end of the year virtual celebration call would be a good idea. Several of those present on the call mentioned perhaps something early next year would be better received when people are less busy with the holidays and are thinking ahead to the new year.

Scott Rosenkrantz reported on current graphic design projects including the Cultural and Heritage Guide, ads for Winter on Whidbey, an ad for the Coupeville/Langley Shop Local Guide and joint ads with the Camano Island Chamber for Northwest Glass Quest and the Spring Art Tour. He also provided graphic design support for the Be Our Guest event and created a new logo tote bag and pull up banner.

**Chamber Roundtable Reports:**

- Camano Island: Chili Chowder Cook Off event is coming up as well as a Shop Local Win Local campaign, and a number of holiday markets.
- Oak Harbor: Best of Whidbey Gala is coming up as well as Veteran's Day parade and events, New Year's Eve and others. Oak Harbor Chamber has hired a new events and logistics manager and is celebrating reaching 500 members. They are also working on 2024 plans.
- Freeland: Held a successful Trunk or Treat event, holiday tree lighting is coming up on Nov 27. They are working on plans for 2024 promotions including the return of the July 3rd fireworks show.
- Coupeville and Langley: They are working together on a new holiday gift guide which includes a printed piece and broadcast advertising to the Seattle area market. Lights of Langley are coming up, improvements to the Highway 525 Kiosk. Work is underway to increase and promote electric charging stations and the new Cascade Cultural Museum is in development.
- EDC: First draft of the CEDS is coming together as well as a number of workshops, trainings and educational opportunities. One free program called "Size up" offers an analysis of the marketplace for small business owners.
- Ebey's Landing: Ebey's Forever Conference kicks off Nov 3 and includes a new farm brochure and Coupeville coupon shopping booklet.

**Next Meeting** December 7 at 11: a.m. at the Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce office.

There being no further discussion, the meeting closed at 12:42 pm.

Minutes submitted by  
Sherrye Wyatt

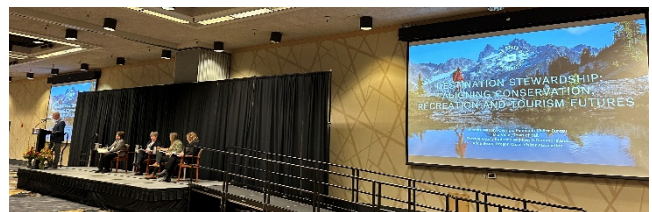


## CREATIVE TEAM REPORT

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

### SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING

- The **Be Our Guest** event on Oct. 17 designed for lodging to meet and greet was very successful, with approximately 60 people participating. There are many conversations and steps toward bridge building that need to continue. Embrace distributed materials and Chambers had the opportunity to meet with lodgings.
- Sherrye met up with five Australian travel product managers on Oct. 21 and showcased some of Whidbey Islands' hidden treasures. They were guests of the Port of Seattle and State of Washington Tourism.
- RFPs for seven contracts are live online and are being advertised in local papers, deadline Nov. 27 at 12 noon PST [Jobs - Whidbey and Camano Islands \(whidbecamanoislands.com\)](https://www.whidbecamanoislands.com/jobs)
- Sherrye presented on a panel about Stewardship at the State of Washington Tourism conference in Yakima with representatives from Vail, Oregon Coast and the Olympic Peninsula Oct. 24-26. Embrace also won the Destination Stewardship award for our work on regenerative tourism which is a HUGE honor! [Reimagining Tourism: A Community-Based Tourism Model - Whidbey and Camano Islands \(whidbecamanoislands.com\)](#)
- We have a lot of the updated reprinted 24 Trails off the Beaten Path to distribute. Please contact [info@whidbecamanoislands.com](mailto:info@whidbecamanoislands.com) to request copies.
- Evergreen Escapes is offering a new winter birding trip from Seattle which includes Deception Pass and Whidbey Island <https://www.evergreenescapes.com/tours/deception-pass-whidbey-island/>
- The last of the Sound Edge '23 advertising points are for the *Winter on Whidbey* visitor guide: four page inside spread with map and back cover promoting the trails guide.



## OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

### Monthly Overview

October has been quite the month. On the heels of national press headlines like MSN's [Whidbey and Camano Islands Are Taking a Residents-First Approach With Their Regenerative Tourism](#), and National Geographic's "[Top Place to Travel in the US](#)," including responsible travel tips, Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands became the recipient of the Destination Marketing Association of the West's "Best Ideas" award for our "Regenerative Places" program. Erin Osborne traveled to Tahoe to share our story, and receive the award at the DMA West Educational Summit, Oct. 11-13.



The objective of DMA West's Best Idea Program is to share innovative techniques or imaginative approaches to promoting destinations, developing assets, providing services, or communicating with stakeholders and residents. A board-appointed task force reviewed the best idea submissions and invited winners to present their best ideas at DMA West's Education Summit.



Fall and shoulder season travel continued to make key regional and top tier national media headlines, including a fall destination story in Seattle Met, inclusion in a feature story in Elle Magazine [Practical Magic's Enduring Legacy on Style and Pop Culture, 25 Years Later \(elle.com\)](#) and anticipated coverage for Coupeville and Practical Magic on The Today Show (NBC) on October 23 (pending breaking news). <https://www.today.com/video/visit-these-destinations-featured-in-your-favorite-spooky-movies-196203077679>

### Coming up

As we approach the end of the year, we also reviewed our key performance indicators we had set for the year, which included both reach and quality of media attention we've received. In looking at the more concentrated number of media visits combined with key headlines focused on responsible travel, we're trending toward a highly successful 2023. The next few months will focus on preparation for International Media Marketplace in January 2024, in addition to winter and early spring content creation and overall strategy plans for 2024.

**Press Highlights for the month** include 17 pieces of coverage with an audience of 11.1 million people. To view the coverage in full go [here](#). **Press highlights from the year-to-date** include a reach of 1.89 billion estimated views, and 236 total engagements; likes, comments and shares across social media. 163 pieces of coverage with a domain rank of 59. A comprehensive YTD coverage report is linked [here](#).

### For reference (2022)

- Reach: *16.9 million* estimated views and *163,000 total engagements*; likes, comments and shares across social media. Total pieces of coverage: *547 pieces of earned media*, with an average *domain authority of 55*.



## **Project Management**

- Secured new interest in collaborative storytelling, secured new opportunities and managed existing partnerships with several partners, outlined below.
- Developed travel itineraries for a number of media visits
- Coordinated with the following outlets on a Practical Magic feature which included rounding up interview subjects:
  - Seattle Met, Alison Williams
  - NBC's Today Show, Misty Belles that will air October 23 (9am-10am)
  - Elle Magazine, Marie Lodi

## **Media Visits Year-to-date**

- Carrie Honaker, Modern Farmer, SilverKris, Wine Enthusiast, March 2-5
- KING 5 Evening, Anne Erickson, March 17
- Molly Amber, Seattleite, March 25-27
- Mary Rose Denton, Seattle Refined, March 25-27
- Terumi Pong, An Emerald City Life, March 30-31
- Jayson Moorman, Explore Moore, April 6-8, April 12-14
- St. Clair Family, Accessible Family Travel, April 28-30
- Allison Williams, Seattle Met, July
- Suzanne Stavert, Adventures of Empty Nesters + Travel Connections Podcast, May 5-7
- Susanne Mueller, Welcome Aboard, August 27-29
- Jean Chen Smith, USA Today Syndicate, Travel + Leisure, September 26-30
- Liz McGuffin, With Wonder and Whimsy, September 14-17
- Jessica Wick, Fab Washington and Seattle Refined, September 15-17
- Marie Lodi, Elle Magazine, October 27-28

## **Instagram Engagement**

- Reposted influencer and local business content, and managed the community with likes, comments and interaction on the @GoWhidbeyCamano Instagram page. Maintained goal of 2-3 posts per week, with stories posting on an ongoing basis.
- Follower count grew from 2,833 on September 15 to 2862 on October 15, a growth rate of 1.02%.
- Follower count grew from 2,515 on January 23 to 2,865 on October 18, a growth rate of 13.92%

## **Pending Press**

- *USA Today Syndicate*, a second story by Jean Chen Smith is anticipated
- *Welcome Aboard Magazine* (German Cruising Publication), writer Susanne Mueller staying on Whidbey Island August 29-30 as part of a Port of Seattle arranged media tour.
- **NBC's Today Show**, Misty Belles aired October 23 (9am-10am)  
<https://www.today.com/video/visit-these-destinations-featured-in-your-favorite-spooky-movies-196203077679>

## **COMPUTERPIX**

### **Executive Summary**

- Short-term rentals by zip code show Clinton produces the highest revenue in Island County.
- Diane's Data Drop fizzled out, but we're now meeting with individuals with great success as we can provide data specific to the needs of the location.
- The advertising campaigns with Datafy are showing high levels of success with the potential of higher returns on investment as the year progresses and into next year.
- Coupeville video used on the Today show.
- Website technical update continues.

### **Island County Short-Term Rentals Revenue by Zip Code**

AirDNA provided us with a list of all STRs in Island County. From that list we were able to create an interactive map that shows the location of each STR including addresses. Click to see the map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1tT4nYn8gGrkjNe0wdXL5ruGGcV29X8A&usp=sharing>

Further review of the data allows us to see the following:

<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>	<b>Daily Rate</b>	<b>Market Performance</b>	<b>Available Listings</b>	<b>Average Length of Stay</b>	<b>RevPAR</b>
Clinton	\$89.7K	61%	\$401.20	51	153	3 days	\$246.60
Freeland	\$74.9K	59%	\$347.90	60	128	3 days	\$204.60
Greenbank	\$73.2K	57%	\$352.60	73	52	3 days	\$198.70
Camano Island	\$71.4K	60%	\$325.60	62	174	3 days	\$189.90
Oak Harbor	\$71.1K	64%	\$306	64	159	3 days	\$194.70
Coupeville	\$67.3K	64%	\$286	68	157	3 days	\$182.40
Langley	\$63.4K	61%	\$286.10	60	162	3 days	\$178.30

The zip codes are ordered by highest revenue to lowest revenue. The occupancy ranges from 57% to 64%. As would be expected given location and the wide range of types of STRs, the daily rates range from \$286 to \$401 per night. Interestingly, the average length of stay is 3 days for all zip codes.

### **Diane's Data Drop**

We have discovered individuals are interested in data, but only if Diane meets individually with them over data that directly impacts their locations. That makes sense as we already report quite a bit of Island County-wide data. We have met with two of the Chamber Directors over the past couple of months and are reaching out to others as time permits.

Specifically, we are helping chamber directors determine success levels of events, the number of short-term rentals within their zip code and city limits, visitor and vehicle traffic to certain sectors of the zip code, and other needs specific to the location.

**Datafy Ad Campaigns**

Outdoor Leisure Campaign (data current to 9/30/2023)

Campaign Dates: 2/15/2023 - 4/15/2023

Spend = \$5,000

Total Impressions = 647,646 (8/12/2023); 647,696 (9/30/2023) an increase of 50 (the ad campaign ended 4/15/2023)

	8/12/2023	9/30/2023	Change
Estimated ad Impact	\$236,742.00	\$285,272.00	\$48,530.00
Return on Ad Spend (ROAs)	\$47.59:\$1	\$57.34:\$1	\$9.75:\$1 in 45 days
Travel Days	1,122	5,496	4,374 days
Average Visitor Days	4.2 days	4.1	-0.1 day
Total Impressions	647,646	647,696	50
Total Clicks	1,521	1,521	no change

For a trial, this was a very successful campaign. We continue to see added ROAs as time progresses. In spite of the slight decline in Average Visitor Days, this number is higher than the county’s average of 1.8 days. As a reminder, this campaign ended on April 15, 2023 and was specifically targeted to those who live within 400 miles of Island County and tend to gravitate towards outdoor activities. We can expect to continue to see impact from this campaign.

Transformational Travel Campaign (data current to 9/30/2023)

Campaign Dates: 7/7/2023 – 8/31/2023

Spend = \$9,664.57 (\$10,000 Budgeted)

	8/12/2023	9/30/2023	Change
Estimated ad Impact	\$6,752.00	\$18,990.00	\$12,238
Return on Ad Spend (ROAs)	\$0.70:\$1	\$1.90:\$1	\$1.10:\$1
Travel Days	32	451	419 days
Average Visitor Days	3.8 days	5.0	1.2 days
Total Impressions	1,225,508	1,270,037	44,529
Total Clicks	2,234	2,289	55

This campaign was specifically targeted to the Phoenix/Prescott, AZ DMA as it was part of the grant from the Port of Seattle provided to us with the intent of bringing visitors to Island County via Sea-Tac Airport. In the August Digital Report, we offered that there are three things we felt we could take from this campaign. First, visitors seem to tend to plan further in advance for



longer trips, or trips further away from home. The change in numbers suggests this is true. Second, we initially started with too small a target audience. We asked to have it expanded immediately once we determined we weren't reaching as many potential visitors as we had hoped. There is no way to determine if this is an accurate statement, however, past experiences point to it being true. Third, the impressions and clicks are higher than one would expect, meaning there is a lot of interest being generated by this campaign in the Phoenix/Prescott DMA. We think the increase since 8/12/2023 indicates this is true. Finally, we can expect to see this campaign to show greater returns as we get further into this year and next year. Thus far, this seems to be happening. We will continue to monitor the outcomes from this campaign. As one would expect, visitors coming from this distance are staying longer than our typical average of 1.8 days. This is true as the average length of stay is 5.0 days to the destination (Island County).

### **Market Report**

We submitted a sample 72-page Market report to the Management Committee for their assessment and review. Because of its size, we suggest we submit this quarterly.

### **Data for Others**

We assisted Jennifer Noveck with data for her CEDS report for Island County. We assisted the Langley and Coupeville Chambers with Zip Code data for an upcoming campaign.

### **Video/Photos**

Fresh video was taken in Coupeville for a Today Show segment on vacationing at favorite film locations. This was also added to our database.

### **Website Conversion**

We continue to do a page-by-page conversion of the website to Gutenberg, the default page-building platform in WordPress. This is to allow us to remove Theme X, which conflicts with some of the other software that is running the site.

## **LAURA HILTON**

Laura gave a presentation at the Coupeville Chamber meeting about ways to get involved with the film industry. She was also invited to speak as a panelist on State of WA Tourism's webinar of the same topic. These were great opportunities to connect with interested parties locally and statewide, exploring the many benefits of being a film friendly destination. Laura is working on setting up a meeting between Langley city staff and Washington Filmworks staff, to debrief on a recent Toyota shoot and prepare for future productions. Any other organizations are invited to reach out to Laura and discuss this topic too.

She is in continuing contact with a local Freeland-based filmmaker about a short film currently slated to shoot in January; and provided several location options and local information to a Seattle-based filmmaker looking to participate in the 48 Hour Film Festival. She communicated with a producer from Vox and local photographer additionally. She has added new properties to [Reel Scout](#), and continues to distribute flyers encouraging others to list their properties.

This month's "Be Our Guest" lodging event at Seabiscuit was a success, with good attendance and good conversations. Laura met several vacation rental owners who were interested to list their properties on [Reel Scout](#), or be contacted for production accommodation; she also connected with a couple of realtors who have intriguing portfolios and willingness to be contacted for filming purposes. Follow-up calls and emails have been exchanged and new listings have already appeared on the database due to this event.

Laura's main focus this month has been completing all the ground truthing and copywriting for the upcoming Culture & Heritage Guide. Local organizations are being contacted for approval, and edits are being incorporated into the drafts. Laura is uploading photography and Scott is hard at work on the layout and design. All efforts are being made to lock in the printed resources now, but further copywriting will be needed for the online content, to expand these topics.

## VICKI GRAHAM

- Vicki attended Virtual Meetings with Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands (EWCI) and the Creative Team
- Vicki also attended Virtual Meetings Local2030 Islands Network's Quarter 3 Virtual Meeting of the Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism Community of Practice, focused on *"The Role of Regenerative Tourism in Revitalizing and Stewarding Culture."*



### **Regenerative Vanua's interpretation of Regenerative Agritourism (RA)**

"Regenerative Agritourism is an ecologically and socially inclusive model of agritourism on authentic working farms that are practicing regenerative agriculture.

Educational, interactive and transformative experiences are delivered based on the interpretation of regenerative agroecosystems which support climate resilience. Experiences are not primarily for international visitors, the operator acts as a regenerative ambassador tailoring experiences aimed at promoting regenerative agricultural practices and supporting positive behavior change and connecting local youth, community and domestic tourists to local farming and food systems".

**Vicki participated in the State of Hawaii Tourism Conference 2023, representing Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands:** Over 500 attendees were engaged in insightful dialogues on travel and tourism, led by global industry luminaries. These discussions covered pivotal topics and issues that will undoubtedly influence stewardship conversations and impact for Hawai'i in the years to come. This year's primary focus revolved around vital conversations concerning Maui, industry trends and concerns, and the significant strides achieved through our Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs). We also delved into the issues within the hospitality sector, regenerative tourism, and emerging research trends and tools. International Airline Updates include flights flying out of Seattle to international destinations; Cruise Industry




Hawai‘i Tourism Europe,  
Hawai‘i Tourism Canada,  
Hawai‘i Tourism Korea,  
Hawai‘i Tourism China, and  
Hawai‘i Tourism Japan.

*Speakers included Senator Lynn  
Decoite, Governor Green, and Lt  
Governor Silvia Luke*

## **ROSENKRANTZ PRODUCTIONS**

Here is a recap of some of the work done for Embrace this month:

- Cultural and Heritage Guide, including travel to Hebulb Culture Center Tulalip and Swinomish Tribal Office, La Conner
- Retractable Banner design, coordination, and printing
- Tote selection, design, coordination, and printing
- Trails Guide shipping and delivery coordination
- Web images, website/eblast review and feedback
- Be Our Guest Events: Strategy/planning meetings, postcard design, coordination, printing and mailing, web graphics and 2 sided flyer
- EWCI Committee meetings
- EWCI Creative Team meetings

	Vendor	Date	Invoice#	Amount	2023 Bills Invoices on November 21, 2023
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	10-18-23	23-21	\$7,011.93	Analytics, Content Creation, Newsletter, Research, Website Maintenance, Video, Calendar, Social Media
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	10-18-23	23-22	\$547.79	Platforms, Subscriptions for Digital Marketing and Management of Content
	Dianne Binder	11-17-23	ICT1223	\$300.00	Bookkeeping Oct-Dec 2023
	Hemlock Printer	11-21-23	295123	\$50,569.15	Printing and Delivery of Culture and Heritage Guide – 20,000 Copies
5007383	Laura Hilton	11-15-23	2311	\$4,000.00	Research, Film Requests, Writing, Heritage Guide, Regenerative Places, Photography
5007383	Laura Hilton	11-15-23	1123	\$54.32	Expenses & Mileage
	Noel Bores	11-21-23	000070	\$1,000.00	Content Creation – Video, Photos, Story for SIP Magazine Sponsored Content
	Osborne Northwest	11-16-23	2589	\$4,500.00	Monthly Contract for Media Relations
	Osborne Northwest PR	11-16-23	2590	\$1,500.00	Monthly Contract for Instagram
	Osborne Northwest PR	11-16-23	2591	\$1,500.00	International Media Marketplace – PR Project Fee – Special Project
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	11-17-23	3250	\$2,600.00	Monthly Contract for Design Fees
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	11-17-23	3251	\$39.60	Purchase of Holiday Stock Image
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	11-17-23	3253	\$4,875.00	Heritage and Culture Guide Document Outline/Content Research – 4th of 4 invoices
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	11-15-23	111523	\$9,000.00	Monthly Contract for Consulting Services
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	11-17-23	111723	\$111.35	Expenses & Mileage -including expenses for Sept and Oct Tourism Committee Meetings
	Sound Business Center	11-1-23	205997	\$264.60	Photocopies/Printing, Office Supplies
	Sound Publishing	10-31-23	8118501	\$1,125.00	Edge Advertising Contract – Winter on Whidbey Ads
	Vicki Graham	11-15-23	0006	\$1,400.00	Regenerative Program Support
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$90,398.74</b>	