



**Embrace Whidbey & Camano Islands
Board Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2023
At Greenbank Farm and virtually via Zoom**

Board members in person:

Jackie Henderson, Chair, Town of Coupeville
Mayor Scott Chaplin, Treasurer, City of Langley
Lynda Eccles, Secretary, Coupeville Chamber
Bryan Stucky, Oak Harbor City Council
Sharon Sappington, EDC

Board members virtually:

Max Lindsay-Thorson, South Whidbey Lodging
Aly Willis, Central Whidbey Lodging
Holly Grason, Coupeville Lodging
Jessica McCreedy, Camano Island Chamber
Allanah Johannsen, Camano Island Lodging
Magi Aguilar, Oak Harbor Chamber
Commission Melanie Bacon, Island County
Angela Muniz, Freeland Chamber

Creative Team in person and virtually:

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

Guests in person and virtually:

Emily Wandres, Contractor
Marie Shimada, Ebey's Landing
Mark Renthrow, Administrator, City of Langley



Call to Order: Chair Jackie Henderson called the meeting to order at 11.05 a.m. and established that we had a quorum.

Introduction of new Board Member and a Guest:

Chair Jackie Henderson welcomed new Board Member Bryan Stucky representing Oak Harbor City Council to the Board. The Chair then welcomed guests Emily Wandres and Marie Shimada.

Adoption of Agenda:

Chair Jackie Henderson asked if there were any changes or additions to the October 5th Agenda, there being none, Mayor Scott Chaplin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Lynda Eccles seconded, the board approved, and the motion passed.

Approval September 2nd Meeting Minutes

Chair Jackie Henderson asked the Board if there were any changes to the September 2nd meeting minutes, there being none, Scott Chaplin made a motion to approve the September 2nd meeting minutes as presented, Jessica McCready seconded, the Board approved and the motion passed.

Public Comment:

Chair Jackie Henderson asked if there was anyone from the public present who wished to make a comment. Marie Shimada personally welcomed Bryan Stucky to the Whidbey and Camano Islands Board of Directors.

Approval September Invoices

Chair Jackie Henderson asked if there were any questions on the Invoices as presented, there being none, Scott Chaplin made a motion to approve the September Invoices, Holly Grayson seconded, the Board approved to accept the invoices as presented and the motion passed. Board Member Aly Willis from the Captain Whidbey Inn abstained as Captain Whidbey Inn had an invoice included on the list of invoices to be paid.

Treasurer's Report

Scott Chaplin presented the Treasurers Report prepared by Diane Binder who was absent. Scott pointed out that Lodging Tax collections were at \$576,660 so far this year, 10% less than this time last year. Reviewing our Budget versus Actual Report, we are 74.2% of our Budget which is right on track. Referring to the County reports, Oak Harbor and Coupeville are still behind on their 2022 reporting, Chair Jackie Henderson said she would follow up with Coupeville. Scott made a suggestion that perhaps the Towns should do the reporting process in a different way to make it easier. Sherrye Wyatt pointed out that we just received our \$30,000 grant from Island County and that is not included in the report this month, and there will be an additional \$10,000 grant from the Port of Seattle later this year.

Business Report from the Chair

Chair Jackie Henderson reported that the Management Committee is working on the RFPs for the Contractors and will report on the progress to the full Board at the next meeting. The Chair then asked if any of the Board Members would be interested in participating in the RFP review process. Sharon Sappington said she was interested, and Chair Henderson will follow up with her. Chair Henderson also added that she would like to have someone from Oak Harbor and Camano Island participate. Review of proposals from the RFPs will be end of November early December. Allanah Johansen from Cama Beach State Park also expressed an interest.

Creative Team

(full report included in Board Packet)

Sherrye Wyatt opened her report by talking about the 4 Regenerative Pillars which are Transformational Mindset, Healthy Nature, Access and Bridge Building. Each Pillar will have one Ambassador. Sherrye asked the Board for their approval of adding another Ambassador for Healthy Nature, Jen Schmitz. Scott Chaplin moved to approve that Jen Schmitz be added as an Ambassador for Healthy Nature Pillar, Chair Henderson seconded the motion, the board approved and the motion passed.

Marie Shimada, Ambassador for Bridge Building Pillar, gave an update on “Be Our Guest” a lodging industry meet and greet on October 17th at Seabiscuit Bakery in Langley. Board Member Holly Grason asked if there would be opportunity for lodging members to network with one another and was told that the number one goal is to provide a forum for lodging owners to network.

Vicki Graham reported on the Hawaii State Tourism Conference which she attended on behalf of Embrace.

Scott Rosenkrantz reported that the new Trail Guide would be here next week and he will be delivering them. Both he and Laura Hilton are working on the Cultural and Heritage Guide. The Jets on Whidbey Rack Card, the Film Location Flyer, and the updated Map are all available for the board to help distribute.

Jack Penland reported that currently the committee receives a monthly report which Jack is considering changing. Embrace has contracts with AirD&A, DataFy and Simpleview (which includes Book Direct), and his thoughts are that the information they all provide is what most of the Board are looking for, especially the Chambers. He will keep the committee updated on the direction this report should take.

Laura Hilton reported that she recently did a presentation to the Coupeville Chamber of Commerce and is doing more to encourage community members to add their own locations to the Reel Scout Location Database at Washington Filmworks. She also participated in a Webinar with Washington Filmworks and State of Washington Tourism.

Sherrye Wyatt provided an update on her work including coordinating with the State of Washington Tourism and Port of Seattle on a team of Australian travel buyers who will be touring Whidbey Island and staying in Coupeville in October. Also this month she is presenting at the State of Washington Tourism Conference about regenerative travel. She and Erin Osborne have submitted Embrace to a few competitions which recognize destination stewardship. As a result, Embrace just won the “Best Creative Idea” award from Destination Marketing Association (DMA) West. Erin is traveling to the DMA conference next week to

present an overview of Embrace and accept the award. Sherrye also ran through the vast amount of media coverage Erin has secured for Embrace promoting how we are reimagining tourism for the islands.

She also announced she will not submit a proposal for the PR & Marketing Manager contract once the RFP is published and felt it was important for the committee to have that knowledge as early as possible. In January, she is joining the Washington Filmworks team as Rural Economic Development Manager. She will complete her 2023 contract with Embrace and offered to contract back to help with the transition or special projects.

Commissioner Melanie Bacon mentioned that in order to officially confirm the name change to Embrace Whidbey and Camano Islands, the committee may need to amend the bylaws and provide them to the county.

Next Meeting - November 2nd, 11.30 a.m. at Coupeville Library (note new time).

There being no further discussion, the meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Minutes submitted by
Lynda Eccles,
Secretary, Board of Directors