

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, February 4, 2021.

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No new cases of COVID-19 were reported Wednesday or today, so far. Jefferson County has logged 307 cases of the virus, with 35 people now awaiting test results. It's unlikely that we'll go two days without any new cases, so you can log on to either the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) or the Jefferson County Government Facebook page for the latest figures.

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Many Port Townsend water customers saw a \$20 or so increase in this month's bill, due to the late reading of water meters that led to the inclusion of a few more weeks of service. This is a temporary situation, as customers will see a decrease in the February bill and a stabilization thereafter. Meter readings usually occur during the first week of the month but fell behind in January due to an equipment malfunction and the illness of a city employee. They are back on schedule this month, according to Nora Mitchell, the city's finance director.

The resolution is complicated by the water billing process, where customers kick into a higher rate if they go above the certain level. The city must now evaluate each account and correct those where the higher rate was assessed. The readjustments will take the form of a credit on a future bill. Mitchell said the city services about 5,000 water accounts. She said the city has received five to ten inquiries per day since the bills went out. She encourages anyone with questions to contact the finance department, 360-385-2700.

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The last online community introduction session of candidates for the Port Townsend and Chimacum School superintendent positions takes place from 3 to 3:30pm today. Today's candidate is Dr. Diana Roybal is the Executive Director of Elementary Education in Cherry Creek School District in Colorado.

Edmonds High School Principal Dr. Scott Mauk and Highline Public Schools employee Linda Rosenbury, candidates for both positions, appeared on Monday. Portland Public Schools supervisor Katie Lindholm is only under consideration for the Port Townsend job.

Chimacum plans to announce its final choice at a February 20 meeting of the school board. Port Townsend has not scheduled a date for its final announcement, but it should be in the same time frame. Both districts are now under the guidance of interim superintendents. The new superintendents are expected to be in place for the next school year. The online meeting link is posted on both districts' web sites, which also contain information about all the candidates. The meetings themselves are not archived.

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The County Commissioners will hold a special meeting tomorrow, Friday, February 5, beginning at 8:30am to discuss planning for 2021-22 with eight departments and their directors: Public Works, Emergency Management, Public Health, Extension Service, Community Development, Human Resources, Central Services, and County Administration/BOCC. Former county administrator and DCD director David Goldsmith will facilitate. Staff will provide abstracts for each department and outline initiatives, COVID-19 impacts, and trends for 2021. The meeting will last all day, adding a new dimension to the idea of "binge watching." For logon instructions go to the Jefferson County Government Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/jeffcowagov/>).

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And a correction: On Tuesday we reported a quote from county health officer Dr. Tom Locke that 26,000 Jefferson County residents over 65 are eligible for a COVID vaccine. We're not sure if Locke misspoke or if the meeting was incorrectly transcribed. But that figure is obviously incorrect, as the county only has around 30,000 residents. While it's easy to blame the source, the number was flat out wrong and we should have caught this.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.