

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, February 23, 2021.

Jefferson County added one new case of COVID-19 on Monday, bringing the total to 331. Three test results are pending. Jefferson Healthcare is continuing the vaccination process, having received a shipment this week. As of this morning it began sending notices to some 70 year olds, calling them in for appointments on Friday or Monday.

The shipments contain 195 vials. Prior to this week that meant 975 official doses with most vials yielding an "extra sixth dose" provided the proper syringe is available. So a shipment of 195 vials yields 1170 doses. After the email people are given 48 hours to respond. If they don't, their slot is given to someone else and they remain on the list. Some people have received vaccinations from other sources; if that's the case they should notify the hospital to, again, give the slot to the next person. This process will continue until every person in the county who wants a shot will get one, according to hospital spokesperson Amy Yaley.

Technical problems have plagued the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners meetings over the last two weeks, causing the delay of the February 15 meeting and the rescheduling of yesterday's meeting to 3pm this afternoon. The glitch also caused the postponement of an online retreat that included all county departments, that was scheduled for today.

As of this morning technical personnel are working to fix the problem, so it's uncertain as to whether the meeting will actually occur, but board clerk Carolyn Galloway is optimistic about its chances. The meeting, when it occurs, is broadcast live. You can watch the meeting live on the county's web site (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/492/Board-of-County-Commissioners>), where it is also archived.

Galloway told KPTZ that the county is in the midst of a switch from Go To Meeting to Zoom as its default video platform. This choice originated from the commissioners, who have used many different platforms and prefer Zoom due to its capacity and participation channels. Galloway hopes that Zoom will be operational "sooner rather than later," predicting mid March at the earliest.

The additional cost to the county will be about \$7,000 a year for 21 licenses that will be distributed to different departments.. The county does not pay for Go To Meeting as it's included in its phone system. So the county will use both platforms to connect with the public. There could be an easy fix for the problem, but it also could be attributed to a widespread technical anomaly, as when a car or computer or TV stops functioning correctly when it is about to be replaced.

The tech issues didn't stop County Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke from his weekly briefing that was carried live here on KPTZ. He reported that the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine around the state is "erratic," but predicted that supplies will increase in March when Jefferson Healthcare will have enough vaccine to administer 2,000 does a week. He also expects that large vaccination clinics will soon be held in high schools around the county, handling about 500 people per day.

The Port Townsend and Chimacum boards of education will hold a joint Zoom meeting Wednesday February 24 – that’s tomorrow – at which time they could announce who will serve as superintendents in both school districts for the next school year. Both schools are now employing interim superintendents, and set aside this school year for the search. They collaborated and selected four candidates. Each district chose one finalist at their last meetings and have used the intervening time to check references, negotiate with the candidates and presumably make an offer. While the finalists met the public several weeks ago, the names of those chosen are as yet unannounced.

Port Townsend Schools spokesperson Sara Rubenstein lauded the joint selection process, saying that it demonstrated how well the two districts can collaborate. She expects the collaborative process will continue under the new superintendents, who are already acquainted. The two districts have historically shared resources such as transportation, and COVID-19 has led to the establishment of joint East Jefferson competitive sports teams. The meeting will take place at 5pm on Zoom, beginning with an executive session before opening the meeting. The link is available on both districts’ web sites.

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.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.