

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for April 21, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported one new COVID-19 case yesterday. So far this week Public Health has reported a total of three new cases, bringing our total up to 382. There are 62 tests pending, and 10 active cases in isolation.

The city of Port Townsend's transportation committee began a two-part discussion on street preservation at their meeting last Thursday. According to public works director Steve King, the city does not currently have a pavement preservation program in place. That means there is no money set aside annually in the budget for regular repaving or chip sealing. The problem with that, according to King, is that without regular preservation, other than spot fixes, there comes a point when the pavement degrades so much that you have to dig it up and repave it, which isn't exactly in the city's \$900,000 a year streets budget.

Anyone who has driven around Port Townsend will agree with King, who said at the meeting last week that we have a number of streets that are past the point of preservation and need to be dug up and repaved. However he added that other streets just need to be treated periodically to keep them from going into disrepair. The purpose of a pavement preservation program is to prevent streets from going past the point of preservation and into total disrepair. At the meeting, King detailed the different options for street preservation, such as teaming up with Jefferson County Public Works to do chip sealing on residential streets, or the much more costly total reconstruction – like the city did on Water Street two summers ago.

The transportation committee will continue discussing the different options for a pavement preservation program at a meeting scheduled for May 8. The topic is one of several streets-related topics that are part of the city's Comprehensive Streets Program. By this summer, the city's public works department hopes to be in discussions with city officials about how to finance major street improvement projects, such as repaving the city's 88 miles of streets, which are largely in disrepair. To learn more about the Comprehensive Streets Program, go to the city's website and click on "Engage PT" (<https://cityofpt.us/engagept>).

City hall has reopened its doors to the public after being closed for a year due to COVID-19. City hall is now open Monday through Friday from 10am to 2pm. To remain COVID-safe, the city installed a front desk on the first floor lobby to accommodate walk-in requests for city services. However, more technical requests, such as permit reviews, still require an in-person or virtual appointment.

The Port Townsend Library has also increased their open hours. Library "grab and go" sessions, where you can enter the library for 20 minutes at a time to browse the shelves, pick up holds and check out books, are now available Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10am to 5pm. Curbside holds pickup is still available as well, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10am to 5pm.

Starting May 3, the city will also be making city facilities available for rent again. Those include the Cotton Building, the Pope Marine Building, the Chetzemoka Park Gazebo, and the Mountain View Pool.

After passing a background check, polygraph test, and medical examination, the city's new police chief, Thomas Olson, is starting work this week. According to the post on the city's Facebook page, Olson and his family are relocating to Port Townsend from Auburn. Olson was selected from a field of 30 candidates who applied to take over as chief of the Port Townsend Police. He was selected after a virtual community meet-and-greet, and a community stakeholder panel, which took place in January. Olson has worked in law enforcement for about 32 years, both with the University of Washington Police Department and with the Washington State Patrol. He also served with the Air Force, Air Force Reserves and Washington Air National Guard. Olson will be taking the place of interim chief Troy Surber, who is retiring soon after the transition.

And that's it for today's local news. 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. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.