

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Jefferson County added three new cases of COVID-19 yesterday, bringing the total to 405 cases since the pandemic began. There are nine active cases in isolation with 47 people awaiting test results. The county has maintained a relatively impressive 1.75% infection rate for some time. Vaccinations continue; although the inoculation process has changed. This coming Monday, May 17, Jefferson County Public Health and the Department of Emergency Management will be taking over primary COVID-19 vaccination responsibilities from Jefferson Healthcare. According to a post on the official Jefferson County Government Facebook Page, Jefferson Healthcare wants to get back to their normal services and their core mission of treating people and keeping them healthy.

The mass clinic model used since vaccinations began is not drawing enough people to sustain the process. To fill the gap, DEM and the Health Department will schedule pop-up clinics and smaller outreach efforts. The local pharmacies – Tri-Area, QFC, and Safeway – are offering vaccines as well. Vaccinations will still be available through people's own primary care physicians.

Department of Emergency Management Director Willie Bence said that his agency has partnered with the State Department of Health and their mobile vaccination teams to deliver vaccines to our community's homeless population on Thursday and Friday. They've been working with OlyCAP, Bayside, and Dove House. They will be at a few of those locations, including the Legion shelter, and the the Fairgrounds.

Vaccines are now available to anyone who wants them. Not to tell you what to do, but the benefits of getting vaccinated outweigh the disadvantages of doing so. For more information about appointment availability, call 360-344-9791.

Next Monday, May 17, is also the first day of filing week for this year's election season. Filing begins at 8:30am Monday and closes at 4:30pm on Friday. In-person filing isn't happening this year, so the process is pretty much 24/7. Those filing online need to visit the official web page at <https://voter.votewa.gov/candidatefiling/candidatelogin.aspx>.

The most important requirement is that voter registration must be in the proper district. Those filing online must provide a valid email address and be prepared to make an online payment to cover the filing fees. Those filing by mail must send a candidate declaration and filing fees to Jefferson County Elections, PO Box 563, Port Townsend, WA 98368, with a requirement to arrive at the office by 4:30pm on Friday, May 21. Declaration of Candidacy forms and filing fee information can be found on the elections website at <https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1268/For-Candidates>.

In-person filing is available by appointment only by calling the Auditor's office at 360-385-9119 or 360-385-9117. All the contact links are included in today's Local News transcript on kptz.org.

There is a lot of opportunity to serve, beginning with three open seats on the Port Townsend City Council. So far only two candidates have announced their intention to run, so we need at least four more to create a contest.

Two of the Port of Port Townsend Commissioner seats are on the ballot. Incumbent Bill Putney will not seek another term, while Pete Hanke has not announced his intentions. Incumbent Hospital Commissioners Kees

Kolff and Mari Dressler will run again, as will Port Townsend School Board incumbents Jennifer James Wilson and Connie Welch. All positions are nonpartisan, although local political parties become involved in the campaign.

If three or more candidates file for a position they will be winnowed down to two during the August 3 primary. If just two people file they will proceed directly to Go: the November 2 general election. If only one candidate files for a position they will assume the office by acclamation in January. This is not a good thing for local democracy. We hope that every race is opposed to promote a discussion about local issues. You could run only to stimulate the discussion, but then you run the danger of actually winning. And consider the lives of local journalists, whose lives will get really boring if there are unopposed races.

We'll report the latest filings here on KPTZ, but if you can't wait the auditor's web page will post them as they are submitted...although that action will occur during regular business hours.

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.