

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

After more than a week with no new occurrences of COVID-19 in Jefferson County, the Department of Public Health reported three new cases yesterday. The total is now 415, with 52 people awaiting test results. The three new cases are now the only ones in isolation. During his regular Monday briefing to the Board of County Commissioners County Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke reported Jefferson County's vaccination rate is the highest in the state, with 63% of the total population receiving at least the first dose and 57 percent fully vaccinated. At this rate the county will easily achieve Governor Jay Inslee's goal of 70 percent of people fully vaccinated. Should this occur statewide, this would result in reopening the state and removing the remaining restrictions. Locke said that vaccine hesitancy is still an issue. Of the remaining 30 percent of unvaccinated residents more than half – 16 percent of the population – are "COVID skeptics" who will refuse the vaccination option.

There are several local vaccination options. The best way to find the next opportunity is through the Department of Emergency Management's information line: 360-344-9791. Or you can just visit Jefferson Healthcare. Right now, anyone can walk into the Jefferson Healthcare Express Clinic (adjacent to the hospital's north entrance) without an appointment to receive the single dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Beginning this Thursday, May 27, patients with a Jefferson Healthcare Primary Care provider can receive the COVID-19 vaccine immediately following a regularly scheduled Primary Care appointment at any of the three Port Townsend Primary Care offices.

As for vaccination cards, Dr. Locke said they will probably be used again to record any booster shots that may become necessary. He recommends making a photocopy and getting that laminated to keep in your wallet. He even suggested resizing it so it will fit. Immunization records – including the Covid-19 vaccine – can be accessed at <https://myirmobile.com/>.

Filing week resulted in several unopposed races, where candidates will take office in 2022 by acclamation. Eight county races for various school, fire, water, and cemetery districts drew no candidates at all. In response, the Jefferson County Auditor has established a special three-day filing period beginning tomorrow, May 26, through the end of the week. Candidates can file online, in person, through email, by fax, or by mail. For the details, go to the Auditor's web page (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1266/Elections>) or call 360-385-9118.

Two of the three Port Townsend City Council seats are challenged, with one forcing a primary contest. Aislinn Diamanti is unopposed for Position 2, now held by Ariel Speser. Two candidates, Ben Thomas and Cameron Jones, are in the race for Position 1, now held by Mayor Michelle Sandoval. A third candidate, Harold Sherwood, filed but then withdrew his candidacy.

Three candidates are running for Position 5, Pam Adams' seat: Sky-Hardesty Thompson, Tyler Myles Vega, and Libby Urner Wennstrom. The top two contenders in the August 3 primary will move on to the November 2 general election.

Primary races are also taking place in the Port Ludlow Fire, Sequim School, and Jefferson Clallam Fire Districts. Those to be elected by acclamation include members of the Port of Port Townsend Board of Commissioners, the Jefferson Healthcare Board of Directors, the Port Townsend School District, and the East Jefferson Fire Rescue Board. For the Port, Pete Hanke will take a second term while Carol Hasse will take over

for the retiring Bill Putney. Two years ago, Pam Petranek was elected as the first woman Port Commissioner ever; next year the board will be two thirds female. Znd the Hospital Commissioners Kees Kolff and Mari Dressler earned additional terms, while Connie Welch and Jennifer James Wilson will maintain stability on the school board.

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.