

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for June 30, 2021.

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Jefferson County's COVID-19 case numbers remain the same for now, at a total of 449 cases since the beginning of the pandemic. Right now, there are 6 cases in active isolation and 27 test results pending. Dr. Tom Locke's mask mandate, which required all adults, whether vaccinated or not, to wear a mask inside in public spaces, ends, which means that local businesses will no longer have to require customers to wear face masks. The Jefferson County Courthouse may be reopening to visitors this week – with a new policy in place that allows vaccinated visitors to enter without a mask, if they can prove that they've had the vaccine. According to Judge Mindy Walker, the courtrooms will be open to the public again, but those who have not been vaccinated or who cannot provide proof of vaccination will be required to wear a mask.

The County Commissioners will hold a special meeting today at 1pm to discuss the COVID-19 visitor's policy at the courthouse and county facilities. They will also be discussing a burn ban and fireworks ban, in light of the heat wave that hit Western Washington over the past several days. They will also be discussing some potential actions regarding the homeless encampment and a new county policy on emergency response to COVID-19. No public comment will be taken at the meeting, but people can watch the meeting live by going to the Jefferson County website (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/>) and clicking on "Videos of Meetings."

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At their Monday morning meeting, the Jefferson County Commissioners approved the Public Infrastructure Board's request to reauthorize \$150,000 for the Fort Worden PDA to turn an old barracks building into workforce housing. The Commissioners had actually already approved a \$150,000 infrastructure grant for Fort Worden to create workforce housing in a renovated barracks building, but because of the financial devastation caused by COVID-19 and the reorganization of the Fort Worden PDA board, the money was never used and the grant expired. On Monday the request was brought back to the commissioners, but this time the Public Infrastructure Board requested that the money be given in the form of a forgivable loan. If the Fort Worden PDA does not secure additional financing for the project in a given time, then the funds will be in the form of a loan. However, if they are able to secure more funding and use the \$150,000 for the workforce housing project then it will convert into a grant. According to Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour, who currently sits on the Public Infrastructure Board, the purpose of changing the grant into a forgivable loan is to ensure that the funding is used for the singular purpose of workforce housing. Eisenhower said the renovation of Building 203 at the Fort is still in early stages, so the funding will mostly be used for planning and architectural designs of the renovation. She added that she commends Fort Worden for taking on the project because workforce housing is necessary for the local economy and retaining employees.

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In election news, the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women will be hosting a virtual debate on Thursday between the three candidates who are all vying for Position 5 on the Port Townsend City Council. While there are three seats up for election this year, Position 5 is the only one which will appear on the August 3 primary ballot, because it is the only race with more than two candidates. The three candidates are: Libby Urner-Wennstrom, who has lived in Port Townsend for 23 years and is vice chair of the Jefferson County Democrats; Tyler Vega, a six-year Port Townsend resident who has a history of running for office, having run for city council and for Congress in the past on a liberal agenda; and Sky Hardesty-Thompson, a nine-year Port Townsend resident and small business owner. The debate, which will begin at 7pm, will be moderated by Janette Force. Viewers can watch via Zoom, or tune in to KPTZ 91.9 FM where it will be broadcast on the air.

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A tree collapsed in front of the Port Townsend Community Center – causing the county Parks and Rec Department to close the area to the public. According to Parks and Rec manager Matt Tyler, the tree took on a basket shape with multiple trunks which then rotted because water and material was collecting in the center of the tree. He said the whole tree needs to be removed because the other trunks could collapse even further. Regimental Tree Care – a tree cutting service located in Port Townsend – will be working on removing the tree today. Until then, members of the public are asked to steer clear.

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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](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.