

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for October 27, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 3 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 1,133. There are currently 43 active cases in isolation, and our two-week case rate is 253 per 100,000.

The health department announced last week two new booster shot clinics scheduled for November – this time offering Moderna booster shots. The first will take place on Saturday, November 6 from 1-4pm at the Chimacum School. The second will be on Saturday, November 13, from 1-4pm at Blue Heron Middle School in Port Townsend. Booster shots are only available for people 65 years of age and older and those aged 18 to 64 who are at high risk of severe COVID-19. The health department recommends you receive your Moderna booster six months after receiving your second dose. Moderna boosters are half the dosage of a primary or secondary shot. The CDC has approved the mixing of doses. You can receive a Moderna booster if you are six months past your second dose of Pfizer or two months past your Johnson & Johnson vaccination. Appointments are required for these two clinics. You can schedule your appointment by going to the Jefferson County Public Health website, or calling the Department of Emergency Management's vaccine hotline at 360-344-9791. You will need to bring your vaccine card to your scheduled appointment.

Port Townsend city staff and paper mill officials have begun meeting to discuss the terms of a new agreement between the city and the mill in regards to the Olympic Water Gravity System. If you live within city limits, the source of your water is the Olympic Water Gravity System, which pulls water from the Quilcene watershed and flows through pipes constructed back in 1928. Port Townsend has been in partnership with the paper mill since that waterline was installed, nearly 100 years ago. The mill has operated and maintained the water system since then, and spends approximately \$416,000 per year in maintenance, which includes paying for four full-time workers who live onsite at the Big Quilcene Diversion and at City Lake. There are many increasing costs that the city has to prepare for in order to maintain the waterline. For example, a 9-mile section of the pipeline dates back to 1928 and will soon have to be replaced. The other 19 miles of pipeline date back to the 1950s and early 70s, and may also have to be replaced. To replace all of the pipeline would be an estimated \$113 million. To replace just the section that is the oldest would cost \$43 million. The existing lease between the mill and the city expired in March of 2020, and the city has voted to extend it until December 31 of this year. Because the city cannot afford \$113 million to replace the current water system, the negotiations with the paper mill are important: the city council has to look at the long-term goals for the water line and how a continuing partnership with the private paper mill could be helpful in the long term.

At the city council's meeting last Monday, Public Works Director Steve King gave an update on the current negotiations and planning for the pipeline. He said the city has determined that a continued partnership with the paper mill will produce the best outcome for the future of the pipeline, as it would cost the city much more to take on the responsibility of maintaining the pipeline. At a meeting on November 8, the city will discuss a draft of an agreement and proposed raw water rates for both the city and the mill. Developing a rate for raw water used is critical to determine how much both the city and the mill needs to pay to cover the cost of both operating the pipeline, and funding critical infrastructure replacement and maintenance.

The city council voted on Monday to approve a resolution authorizing the city manager to enter an agreement with an engineering company, RH2 Engineering, to design meters for the pipeline – which will be installed in the transmission lines for both the city and the mill at the place where the pipeline splits between the city and the mill, at the intersection of Mill Road and South 8th Street. The meters will be installed during the mill

shutdown in March of next year, and the total cost of engineering and installation is estimated to be about \$150,000. The money for this will come from the city's Olympic Gravity Water System fund which has a balance of about \$580,000, as the city has been putting about \$50,000 away each year for investing into the pipeline. But King said the city is going to be needing much more in the coming years, which is why city residents can expect a water utility rate increase of about \$7 to \$8 per month. None of these numbers are final, as the agreement negotiation process is ongoing, but King said he hopes to see the agreement voted on at the December 6 city council meeting, and then go into effect on January 1, 2022. The city and the mill will begin paying for water based on raw water rates specified in the agreement after water meters are installed, sometime in April.

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.