

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for December 1, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 6 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 1,303. There are currently 25 active cases in isolation.

The Port Townsend City Council took a first look at the 2022 budget last week, which they will make a final vote on at their upcoming meeting on Dec. 6. Coming out of two years of financial challenges due to COVID-19, city manager John Mauro explained to council members at their last business meeting that the budget reflects a desire to support staff in the coming year, not only by hiring more staff, but also by using American Rescue Plan Act money and operational budget money to improve staff resources and equipment, as well as get back to funding trainings for staff members.

While going through the draft budget for 2022 with the city council, Mauro quoted President Joe Biden who said, "Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value." Mauro said he believes this year's budget reflects the values of the city. And some aspects of the budget seem to do that, including the fact that a large portion of American Rescue Plan Act funding will be dedicated to visioning a future for our Parks Department, as well as the addition of a Project Manager position for capital project work, such as major projects like improvements to roads and our water pipeline.

But sprinkled throughout the budget are funds set aside for our police department. This year, the city has already spent \$160,000 on two new police cars, and \$52,000 on 16 new tasers for a 13-person police force. These two actions already brought on a host of public comments in opposition to further funding the police department, instead of spending money on affordable housing and infrastructure improvements. The 2022 budget includes an increase in police officer staffing, to a total of 15 full-time officers. It also includes \$25,000 of American Rescue Plan Act money set aside for police recruitment. And from the general operational budget, an addition of \$15,000 for police academy training for 3 entry-level police officers; \$10,000 for office furniture for the police department; and \$12,600 for red dot laser sights for the department. A red dot laser sight is a piece of equipment that is mounted to the top of a firearm to help a shooter aim better.

The 2022 budget also includes funding for the police department to contract with MCS Counseling for one full time mental health Navigator. This will continue the work of Judd Haynes, the current Navigator, who is trained as a social worker and de-escalator and accompanies police on mental health related and substance abuse related calls, however it does not expand the program, which the city's committee on law enforcement and public safety recommended the city do in the 2022 budget.

The city council approved the first reading of the draft budget at their last meeting, and will take a final vote next Monday. As always, public comment can be submitted ahead of time to publiccomment@cityofpt.us. And if you want to read the draft budget, go to the city's website and click "Agendas and Minutes" under the "Government" tab (<https://cityofpt.us/citycouncil/page/agendasminutesvideos>).

Starting at 7pm tonight, Finnriver Farm in partnership with the Local 2020 will be hosting three Jefferson County women who will discuss their experiences from earlier this month when they attended the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). Jessica Plumb, an environmental filmmaker; Daphne Wysham, CEO of the Methane Initiative; and Rachel Cardone, the deputy director for the Stanford Program on Water,

Health & Development, will present “What Happened in Glasgow,” from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Finnriver. They will be discussing what they learned at COP26, and how to apply some of the global goals of the conference locally here in Jefferson County. To learn more, visit Finnriver’s website (<https://www.finnriver.com/>).

And today, due to tidal currents, the 5:15pm ferry sailing from Port Townsend and the 6pm sailing from Coupeville are cancelled. Your alternate routes are Edmonds/Kingston and Mukilteo/Clinton.

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.