

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news for May 10, 2022.

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Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence spoke to the Board Of County Commissioners Yesterday for their weekly public health briefing. Case rates in Jefferson and Clallam Counties are now very high. The two-week case rate in Jefferson County last Friday was 537 per hundred thousand. Yesterday, 27 cases were added, so there are now 111 cases in isolation for a total of 3,603 cases since the pandemic began, and 1 person is hospitalized. There have been 28 deaths in Jefferson County since the pandemic began.

In Clallam County, the current case rate is 379 per hundred thousand, total cases so far are 11,572 and as of last Friday 1 person is hospitalized with COVID-19. There have been 111 deaths in Clallam County since the pandemic began.

Dr. Berry mentioned that Jefferson County is going to start what is called “wastewater surveillance” in the water treatment facility for Port Townsend sewers. This can give Jefferson County’s Public Health Department one more tool to monitor the extent to which COVID-19 is present in the community. With more home testing, this makes sense.

She answered a question about when home tests are no longer effective, saying that 15 months past the date of manufacture is a good rule to follow, but if the control line on the home test doesn’t show up, then it is not an effective test. Store unused tests at room temperature, don’t let them heat up in a car, and don’t put them in the refrigerator. You can get home tests from local pharmacies, the county health department and online from Washington State’s “Say Yes Covid Test” website (<https://sayyescovidhometest.org>). You can order two boxes of five tests every month.

Dr. Berry now strongly recommends that if you are indoors with more than 5 to 10 people, regardless of vaccination status, that you mask up, preferably with a well-fitting high-quality mask: N-95, KN-95 or similar. You can look at the latest numbers, mask recommendations, and links to report positive COVID-19 test results at the the county’s websites: <https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19> and <https://www.clallam.net/coronavirus/>.

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Last Friday, May 6, Jefferson County certified the results of the April 26 special election in Quilcene. Voters were asked to approve a \$12.3 million bond issue to build a new school to replace Quilcene Elementary, a new Career and Technical Education building, and improve athletic fields and facilities. The nays won and this vote was almost evenly split. In the three precincts that make up the Quilcene school district, the numbers were 479 for (just under 49% of the vote) and 499 against (just over 51%). The measure needed a 60% majority to pass, and in February, when more people voted, the measure lost by just 5 votes.

The bond issue cannot go before the voters again this year, as there have been two separate votes already. We’ll need to wait and see if it’s put before the voters next year, and whether the measure is revised in some way to make it less costly – or more palatable – to 60% of Quilcene voters.

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There is a meeting this afternoon of the Sims Way and Boat Yard Expansion Stakeholder Committee from 4:30-6pm. The public may not attend or comment during the meeting, but anyone can watch the meeting and access the agenda ([https://cityofpt.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=4&event\\_id=2989&meta\\_id=201233](https://cityofpt.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=4&event_id=2989&meta_id=201233)) on

the city's website. The stakeholder committee was formed after there was considerable pushback from the community on the boatyard expansion plan, so now the City, the Port, and the PUD are seeking input from the committee to revise that plan.

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The Olympic Peninsula Humane Society (OPHS) has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of owner-surrendered dog applications received in the last five weeks. This was reported yesterday in the *Peninsula Daily News*. All of the dogs are young and most have behavioral issues. There is a nationwide phenomenon of “COVID puppies” – or “pandemic puppies,” as they’re called – being turned in to shelters as people transition from at-home work to working outside of the home. Because the dogs have been mostly housebound with their owners while working from home, many have issues around other dogs and children because of that isolation. The Humane Society has been working on retraining the dogs and in some cases placing them with foster families before placing them in their new homes.

Office Manager Justine Parr said OPHS ordinarily receives two to three requests to surrender cats and dogs per week and that has increased to an average of six per week. The increase is all dogs. “We are booking out surrenders up to the second week of May,” Parr said. “We need to space them out so we can find homes and make some room for the dogs who are coming in.” For those interested in fostering, visit <https://www.ophumanesociety.org/foster-program>.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Tuesday.