

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

Candidate filing week ended last Friday, with a majority of Jefferson County races already decided. Any race with more than two candidates runoff in the primary on August 2 with the top two candidates advancing to the general election regardless of party, on November 8.

There is little primary action in Jefferson County. Six county offices drew no opposition at all, which means they are elected by acclamation unless there is a substantial write-in campaign. Those are incumbents: County Assessor Jeff Chapman, Treasurer Stacie Prada, Prosecutor/Coroner James Kennedy and District Court Judge Mindy Walker. Also, Brenda Huntingford for County Auditor and Amanda Hamilton for County Clerk, respectively replacing the retiring Rose Ann Carroll and Ruth Gordon. Also unopposed for a second term is PUD Commissioner Jeff Randall. This creates a potentially unfortunate situation, where both Huntingford and Hamilton will take office without any debates. This is not unprecedented in this area, as two of our new city council members, Owen Rowe and Ash-lynn Diamanti, took office without facing an opponent.

For sheriff, first-term incumbent Joe Nole is challenged by deputy, Art Frank. This repeats the 2018 scenario, where the sheriff is opposed by someone on his own staff. At that time Nole unseated incumbent Dave Stanko.

The county's only primary contest is for District 3 Commissioner, where first-term incumbent Greg Brotherton, a Democrat, has drawn two Republican opponents. This includes county employee Jon Cooke, whom Brotherton defeated in 2018, and Marcia Kelbon, a retired chemical engineer who recently moved to Quilcene.

Our Legislative incumbents, both Democrats, Steve Tharinger and Mike Chapman, have drawn two primary opponents apiece. Tharinger drew one Democrat and one Republican opponent, while Chapman drew two Republican opponents. You can expect several candidate forums over the next few months to help with your voting decision, along with detailed coverage on KPTZ.

Dr. Tom Locke, speaking to the Board of County Commissioners yesterday noted that COVID-19 cases are climbing across the country, up 53% nationally. Hospitalizations are going up. Cases in Washington State are up and there are currently 8 deaths per day statewide. The two-week case rate in Jefferson County is 848 per hundred thousand. There are now 187 people in isolation for a total of 3,912 cases since the pandemic began. Two people are currently hospitalized. There have been 29 deaths since the pandemic began.

In Clallam County, the current two-week case rate is 817 per hundred thousand. Total cases so far are 12,462, and no one is hospitalized, and there have been 112 deaths from COVID-19 in Clallam County since the pandemic began.

Dr. Locke made note of the fact that in the U.S., we have "passed the grim milestone of one MILLION known deaths, and globally the official number is 6.3 million. He said that the World Health Organization estimates the death toll from COVID-19 is probably more than twice that, close to 15 million. He said, "The US has one of the highest mortality rates for COVID-19 in the world, and each of those deaths is a unique story, but as we look at all of them, we can see patterns that have emerged.... We know that three-quarters of these deaths were people who were 65 years of age and older... We know that Black, Hispanic and Native American populations were disproportionately represented. They had almost two times the risk of death as their white

counterparts...And,” he said, ”we know a lot of these deaths could have been prevented, and that’s the most grim statistic of all.”

Dr. Locke mentioned that there was a study from Brown School of Public Health and Harvard last week that calculated that 318,000 people’s lives could have been saved had we fully vaccinated the US population when the vaccine was first available. Dr Locke said, “that is a tragedy that I scarcely have words to express.”

The work done by healthcare workers here in Jefferson County and our citizens prevented many deaths. If our numbers were the same as the US population as a whole, we would have had 98 deaths in Jefferson County rather than 29. He concluded his opening remarks to remind everyone that we are still in the pandemic, and that we have powerful tools we can use: masking, testing, vaccines, ventilation, and antiviral medications. You can look at the latest numbers, mask recommendations, and links to report positive COVID-19 test results at the the counties websites, and there are links on the transcript of this news report for home covid tests.

<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19>

<https://www.clallam.net/coronavirus/>

<https://sayyescovidhometest.org>

Testing and quarantine flowchart:

<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/DocumentCenter/View/12518/Testing-Flowchart>

Nurse Consult Hotline: 360 344-3094

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. This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening, and have a good Tuesday.