

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Friday, January 27, 2023.

The Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners has issued a last call for unallocated ARPA funds from the federal government. ARPA stands for American Rescue Plan Act and millions of dollars have already been distributed from this source. Jefferson County has \$835,000 left to distribute locally, so the commissioners are urging nonprofit and public-sector organizations to submit proposals. Organizations are asked to submit a one-page letter of interest, including project details and a budget by January 31. The county commissions seek requests ranging from \$20,000-\$100,000. Priority will be given to projects that move the needle on housing, economic development, and/or provide other public benefits for residents of the county. The deadline for final proposals is February 10, 2023 at 4pm (NOT postmarked by) at the County Administrator's Office, 1820 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend. For more information, see

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#label/HomeArchive/ FMfcgzGrcPHKnvZXNrjcKhFcJgPZMmJK?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1.>

As reported in the *PT Leader* Wednesday, the long-awaited appraisal of Short's Family Farm has come in. The Port of Port Townsend first entered into a "Letter of Intent" with Roger and Sandy Short to purchase the property in October which will expire January 28, just three days after the appraisal arrived. The market value of the 253.4-acre farm was appraised at \$1.3 million in a document released to the Port on Wednesday, January 25. While the final purchase price is subject to negotiation, the port previously estimated it would be in excess of \$2 million. The farm is one of the largest privately held contiguous pieces of agricultural land in the county and a conservation easement managed by the Jefferson Land Trust signed by the Shorts 2016 prevents the farm from ever being subdivided or converted from agriculture. Greg Halberg, a Washington State-Certified general appraiser with Halberg Pacific Appraisal Service, inspected the property on January 16. Halberg conducted an analysis of comparable sales of properties with similar conservation easements on the Olympic Peninsula and Whidbey Island within a 20-mile radius over the past six years and his firm previously appraised this property for the purpose of valuing the conservation easement in April 2015.

Halberg wrote in his assessment, "Based on my site visit ... and conversation with Mr. Short, the seasonal flooding has gotten worse over the past several years due to a combination of factors. The reasons include continued infestation with invasive canary grass (and) the difficulty of clearing the drainage choke points annually. The long-term effect of the longer flooding season is detrimental to the health of the soil for agricultural purposes." Also included in the assessment is a list of all the soils on the property, three of which are marked "prime farmland" but only "if drained." Erik Kingfisher, the Jefferson Land Trust's stewardship director for the property said at a special meeting held by the port, that the Jefferson County Conservation District has received a grant from the state to study the flooding issue in hopes of finding a solution to the problem.

Also reported on the *PT Leader* website yesterday: The Port Townsend Public Library will be injected with \$10,000 to support Community Read, the library's annual reading event in March. The Port Townsend City Council unanimously approved the funding in its January 17 business meeting, with the monies coming from the Port Townsend Public Library Foundation; a nonprofit organization that provides goods and services to support library programs. The money will be used to purchase up to \$10,000 worth of books for the Community Read, and to distribute the copies for increased program participation.

This year's Community Read book is *Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer and adapted by Monique Gray Smith with illustrations by Nicole Neidhardt.

On the transcript today, the testing flowchart for COVID-19 provided by Jefferson County Public Health (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/DocumentCenter/View/12518/Testing-Flowchart>). I encourage everyone to have a look, download, print it, and put it on your refrigerator. It seems that although we may be done with Covid, Covid is not done with us. Please wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask in all public indoor settings. This is highly recommended by the county.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening and have a healthy weekend.