

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, March 1, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

As detailed in the *Peninsula Daily News*, the Jefferson County Commissioners have identified priority projects to receive federal money from the American Rescue Plan Act. The county has some \$835,000 remaining in federal relief but received 48 proposals totaling more than \$3 million. 17 of the 48 projects were approved for funding. A top priority was the Olympic Peninsula YMCA's early learning center at the 7th Haven affordable housing project in Port Townsend. That project received its requested \$100,000.

Not all received their requested amounts:

- Commissioners approved \$50,000 for the Quilcene Community Center to build a commercial kitchen – \$100,000 had been requested – and \$35,000 to continue to the Jefferson County Rural Library District's digital navigator program.
- The Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building will receive \$80,000 to construct student housing, and \$20,000 will go to the Quilcene Community Center design of a skate park. Both had requested \$100,000.
- A planning and permitting request for \$50,000 for a bicycle pumptrack for the Jefferson County Fairgrounds was approved, as was a \$20,000 request from the Jefferson Interfaith Action Coalition for the winter welcoming center in Port Townsend.
- Habitat for Humanity of East Jefferson County was approved for \$80,000 for its project on Mason Street in Port Townsend.
- And the Olympic Housing Trust will also receive \$80,000 for concrete work for its Dundee Hill project. The Port of Port Townsend will be awarded \$50,000 for phase one of its flood protection and waterwalk project. All three of those organizations had requested \$100,000.

Commissioners said they prioritized projects that created lasting capital improvements, were able to leverage other funding dollars, and had not previously received federal relief money.

As reported in numerous outlets, the disparity between recreational marijuana being legal in the state of Washington and yet still an impediment for employment due to company testing requirements seems to be heading for a resolution, thanks to a bill that passed the State Senate last week. Most employers in Washington would be banned from testing job applicants for cannabis under the new legislation. State Senator Karen Keiser, a Democrat from Des Moines, who is sponsoring the bill, said, "For people who are using a legal substance, having a pre-employment test like this is really unfair, and we should do away with that."

The measure would not prevent businesses from requiring already-hired workers to refrain from off-duty cannabis use. Nor would it prevent other kinds of pre-employment drug screening, such as for cocaine. Opponents of the bill included employers, who said drug testing was an important tool they could use to avoid liability and maintain a safe work environment, but pre-employment pot screening would still be allowed for federal workers or airline workers, such as pilots, as well as for "safety-sensitive positions for which impairment while working presents a substantial risk of death." The bill is just a first step. It still has to be approved by the State House, but a key committee chair told the news website Axios she plans to give the measure a hearing.

The final, definitive results are in for the recent special election in Jefferson County held on February 14. 12,005 ballots were cast out of a registered 24,509 voters, making it a 49% turnout. The East Jefferson Fire Rescue Ballot Measures all passed in clear wins. For District No. 1, Propositions 1 (a regular property tax levy of \$1.30 per \$1,000 of assessed value) and 2 (restoring the fire department's Emergency Medical Services regular property tax levy) were approved with 68.10% and 73.15% of the vote, respectively. For District No. 4, Propositions 1 (a regular property tax levy of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value for maintenance and operations of Brinnon fire department) and 2 (a regular property tax levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for Emergency Medical Services maintenance and operations) were approved 55.04% and 62.87% respectively.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.