

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, November 8, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

In the local elections, there were few surprises as many candidates ran unopposed. These are figures for some of the local races at 8am this morning and with a low 33% turnout of 27,716 registered voters.

Decisively supporting improvements on local infrastructure, the sales and use tax for transportation improvements won handily by 80% to 20%.

Brandon Mack retained his unopposed position as judge in Jefferson Superior Court; Pam Petranek received 88% of the vote over Chuck Fauls as Port Commissioner of the Port of Port Townsend; Bruce J. McComas received nearly the entirety of the vote for East Jefferson County Hospital District No. 2 Commissioner; David Dickson did the same for West Jefferson County Hospital District No. 1 Commissioner Position No. 1, while Brian Hoctor did the same for West Jefferson County Hospital District No. 1 Commissioner Position No. 2.

The four City Council members for Port Townsend – Monica McHager, Owen Rowe, Amy Howard, and David Faber – for positions 3,4,7 and 6 each retained their positions unopposed. The Port Townsend School District No. 50 Director District 1 was won by John Nowak unopposed; the Director for District 2 Simon Little defeated Annie Bartos 82% to 17%; the Director for District 3 Matt Klontz won over Nancy Papasadora 81% to 18%; and for District 5 Director at Large Nathanael L. O’Hara over Timothy S. Hawley 55% to 45%.

The Chimacum School District No. 49 Director for Districts 3 and 4 were won unopposed by Kristina Mayer and Tami Robocker. The East Jefferson Fire District No. 1 Commissioner District 4 was retained by Geoff Masci unopposed. And the sales and use tax for transportation improvements won handily by 80% to 20%

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The Associated Press reports that U.S. regulators with the Environmental Protection Agency say they will review the use of a chemical found in tires, after a petition from West Coast Native American tribes want it banned because it kills salmon as they return from the ocean to their natal streams to spawn.

The Yurok tribe in California and the Port Gamble S’Klallam and Puyallup tribes in Washington asked the agency to prohibit the rubber preservative 6PPD earlier this year, saying it kills fish – especially coho salmon – when rains wash it from roadways into rivers. Washington, Oregon, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Connecticut also wrote the EPA, citing the chemical’s “unreasonable threat” to their waters and fisheries. The agency’s decision to grant the petition last week is the start of a long regulatory process that could see the chemical banned. Tire manufacturers are already looking for an alternative that still meets federal safety requirements.

6PPD has been used as a rubber preservative in tires for 60 years. It is also found in footwear, synthetic turf, and playground equipment. As tires wear, tiny particles of rubber are left behind on roads and parking lots. The chemical breaks down into a byproduct, 6PPD-quinone, that is deadly to salmon, steelhead trout, and other aquatic wildlife. Coho appear to be especially sensitive. The tribes argue that it can kill them within hours and have fought for decades to protect the fish from climate change, pollution, development, and dams that block their way to spawning grounds.

The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that the Board of County Commissioners approved a motion last Monday for county staff to conduct a review for a possible land exchange that would allow Jefferson County to modify the borders of its urban growth area (UGA) and make the county more competitive for certain state grants. In October, Jefferson County submitted three grant applications to the state Department of Commerce's Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP), which would provide funding for infrastructure construction if that construction was connected to housing developments, including a grant to help Port Townsend complete a sewer lift station to connect the Caswell-Brown Village to necessary infrastructure. However, the Caswell-Brown Village sits outside the county's current urban growth area – which is congruent with Port Townsend's city limits – and county officials are concerned that the project might not be eligible for the grants.

While the county argues the site does meet the preliminary requirements, officials are concerned the Department of Commerce might not view the project as eligible for grant funding. But a state bill passed in 2022 does allow counties to modify their urban growth area – areas where denser developments are permitted – so long as they don't increase the total area of the UGA. This would mean that the county can add new parcels to the UGA if they are swapped for parcels of the same size that will be taken out of the urban growth area.

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.