

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, December 13, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that the Board of County Commissioners voted 2-1 this past Monday to look into creating a Public Facilities District to work with the City of Port Townsend to split the cost of an independent financial review for a new aquatic facility in Port Townsend. Public Facilities Districts (PFDs) are countywide bodies with taxing authority to generate revenue for public facilities and supporters of a new aquatic facility have recommended the formation of such a district in Jefferson County as a way of paying for the project.

Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour was the only no vote, saying she was not comfortable with the current proposals for the pool facility. Eisenhour said, “I’m not convinced that a PFD is our only best path forward, and I’m not sure a countywide vote of anything is the mechanism that we need to fund a pool in Port Townsend.”

Commissioner Greg Brotherton, who previously voiced concerns about a countywide PFD being used to pay for a pool located in Port Townsend, said he supported investigating creating the body and beginning a financial review. Replacing the aging pool at the Mountain View Commons in Port Townsend with a new aquatics facility is projected to cost about \$37 million to complete. Many county residents have voiced concern that locating the pool in Port Townsend would make the facility largely inaccessible to most county residents who would still be asked to pay for it through a countywide sales tax enacted by the PFD. County staff will bring more information regarding a PFD to commissioners at their next meeting on December 18.

Also in the *Peninsula Daily News*, Eric Pickens, a Sequim Democrat, is running in 2024 for the Legislative District 24 seat now held by Mike Chapman. More than 50 people attended his kickoff campaign rally Saturday in front of the Sequim Civic Center. Pickens has the backing of Chapman, a Port Angeles Democrat who is running for the state Senate seat vacated by Kevin Van Wege. Chapman attended Saturday’s campaign announcement along with Washington Education Association President Larry Delaney. Pickens, who graduated from Chimacum schools, cites his background as a working parent, an educator, and labor leader. He is president of the Sequim School Board and a Port Angeles school teacher. Income inequality is an issue Pickens is hearing about from constituents across the region, including the issues with housing costs and availability that go with the income disparity. Workers’ rights is another thing Pickens expects to focus on. He said, “I come from a proud union family; I want to make sure we take care of the working class.”

Numerous news outlets report that the remaining murder suspect of two wanted in Kitsap County was arrested Saturday after a pursuit and crash, according to the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, who assisted in his apprehension. Caleb Sloan had been wanted for the fatal shooting of a man in Poulsbo on October 3. Last Saturday at approximately 2pm, Jefferson County Deputy Chad Wheeler spotted Sloan in a grey Acura on State Route 19, heading towards Highway 104. Deputies had been attempting to locate the vehicle and had largely been unsuccessful, until then. Deputy Wheeler followed it at a distance, waiting for other units to arrive. When approaching the Hood Canal Bridge, Sloan began driving recklessly and performing evasive maneuvers. The Acura was eventually found in Kingston, where the driver had struck an Amazon van and ran off. Sloan was eventually taken into custody by Kitsap County deputies.

What's that smell you might ask? Of course, it's the mill! The Port Townsend Paper Corporation has posted on its Facebook page that they are currently engaged in a project to dredge their settling pond. They write, "The pond must be dredged periodically to maintain proper water flow. This activity may stir up pockets of materials that would temporarily add to the normal odors emanating from that area. None of the additional odor is due to emissions that are toxic or dangerous to human health. This work absolutely contributes to our efforts to operate the mill in an environmentally responsible manner. The work...should take a few weeks."

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.