

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. This is Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, March 12, 2024.

In her report to the Jefferson Board of County Commissioners, Dr. Allison Berry explained the new CDC guidance which breaks from self-isolation with COVID infections (because cases are getting less severe) and a new recommendation that anyone 65 or over should get another booster shot if it has been more than 4 months since their last one. Dr. Berry describes it as a replacement of public health directives with individual guidelines and protections (Wear a mask! Get a booster!)

Director of Emergency Management Willie Bence said that March, April, and May can be a slow time for the EOC (fingers crossed). He recommended that people sign up for NIXLE ALERTS and he described how to do that (<https://supportcenter.nixle.com/hc/en-us/articles/19077392253211-Nixle-How-to-Subscribe-to-Nixle-Alerts>), including setting personal preferences on the NIXLE website. You can listen to the entire report to the BOCC, including the answers to KPTZ listeners questions by going to KPTZ.org.

The next health report to the County Commissioners will be the first Monday of next month, April 1, and will air during the Jim B. Show at 9:45am. To submit questions for Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry or Director of Emergency Management Willie Bence, please email your questions to contactus@kptz.org no later than noon, Friday, March 29.

From the *PT Leader*: The deadline to return your ballot for the 2024 Jefferson County presidential primary election is today, Tuesday, March 12, at 8pm at one of 10 local drop-box locations that can be found at voter.votewa.gov.

The voting public might still have some questions as they fill out their ballots. Jefferson County Election Coordinator Quinn Grewell spoke to the the PT Leader about some misconceptions voters might still have about the presidential primary election. She said, “We get a lot of calls asking how the presidential primary affects voting in future elections? The short answer is, it doesn’t. For this election only, voters must mark and sign a party declaration, but this selection does not affect how they may vote in future elections. Also, if a voter chooses not to participate in this election, it does not affect their eligibility to vote in any future elections.”

Grewell cited state law requiring that the signature on a voter’s return envelope must match the signature on that voter’s registration record for their ballot to be counted and said, “That means we check every single signature on every single return envelope in every single election. Each election, many ballots are returned either without a signature or with a signature that doesn’t quite match.” To make sure voters’ signatures pass these checks, Grewell said signatures need not be written in cursive, nicely, or even legibly, so long as they match whatever signatures the county has on those voters’ registration records. She said, “If a voter cannot remember, or has no idea, what signature they used when they registered to vote, or if it’s been a while and their signature might have changed, they can always update their signature, simply by returning a paper voter registration form or visiting our offices.” Voters can download a paper registration form at: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/voter-registration/print-voter-registration-form>.

Grewell added that voters can track their ballot status, because if there’s an issue with a signature, it will be identified on the online ballot tracker, which can be found on the voter portal at voter.votewa.gov. She said if there is an issue with a voter’s signature not matching, or if the voter didn’t sign the declaration, election officials send the voter a “cure letter.” They will also reach out by phone if they have the voter’s current phone

number. If a voter receives a cure letter, they will need to fill it out and return it no later than 4:30pm on Thursday, March 21 for this election. In the meantime, ballots must be postmarked by today, March 12. Postage is prepaid. And as KPTZ previously reported, if you are under 18 but you will be 18 in time for the Presidential Election, you ARE eligible to vote in this primary election. The county voting center is located in Room 170 of the Jefferson County Courthouse at 1820 Jefferson Street in Port Townsend today from 8:30am to 8pm. Voters may call the county voting center with any questions at 360-385-9119.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can reach out to us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.