

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

We are having our spring KPTZ fundraiser from this week through Saturday May, 11 and the new studios will be open to the community from 10am to 5pm each day. And all 91.9FM listeners should feel free to stop by and see us in action. Come on down! Make a donation! Thank you for your support!

And of course with a new month comes a new Public Health Report from the Public Health Officer for Jefferson and Clallam Counties, Dr. Allison Berry to the Jefferson Board of County Commissioners. Dr. Berry said that all things COVID-19 are continuing to downtrend. Centers for Disease Control stopped tracking hospitalizations on May 1, but Dr. Berry assures us that Washington State and Jefferson County continue to track those numbers, and if there is a sudden spike upward we will be informed of this change. The current numbers indicate Covid is settling down to be more of a seasonal concern, but also that it is still more deadly than influenza, so that she recommends that we keep up to date with our boosters and still continue to mask in settings where the more vulnerable among us are at risk.

She spoke about long COVID and the staggering number of people worldwide who are infected with this real health concern. A *Nature Review* article from 2023 indicated that 10% of cases turned out to be long Covid. That's about 65 million cases worldwide and is termed by the medical community as a "mass-disabling event" which has made it extremely difficult if not impossible for people so afflicted to return to work.

The other matters discussed during the BOCC Public Health Report: Avian influenza and how it is now in some dairy cow herds. Dr. Berry strongly recommends we drink no raw milk, only pasteurized milk at this time.

And the lower number of actual listener questions and the general lack of alarm over public health issues has caused the BOCC to discontinue monthly health reports until this fall. Two commissioners, Kate Dean and Greg Brotherton thought this made sense. Commissioner Eisenhower dissented and said she was receiving push back on this via text during the broadcast.

County Connections is on KPTZ every Friday at 12:30pm with one of the Jefferson County Commissioners and Jim Burke as co-hosts so if greater concerns come up they could be addressed during that program and listeners can also virtually attend the Board of Health Meetings by going to the Jefferson County Public Health website. If you have any questions or concerns about this change, please reach out to KPTZ at contactus@kptz.org or news@kptz.org.

From this week's *Jefferson County Beacon*, a new worker-directed news nonprofit: It seemed that Heather Dudley-Nollette would be unopposed in her effort to succeed Jefferson County District 1 Commissioner Kate Dean. On Monday Port Townsend City Council member Ben Thomas filed for the position, creating a two-person race. If Dudley-Nollette had not been challenged, she would have advanced to the November 5 general election and be elected by acclamation, which Thomas was unwilling to accept. Thomas said, "Part of my decision was based upon the spirit of democracy. It's important that we don't have a coronation...But stewing over this for two months, I was trying to figure out what's the right path forward for me, my family, and also for the county. So this feels important to me for its own sake, to actually win."

And lastly, some sad news for the KPTZ family and the larger community. Fred Kalish, who recorded the Monday Community Calendar, has died suddenly. Everyone who knew Fred even a little found he was a quiet man with a positive spirit. Noah of the Rat Island Rowing Club sent out an email yesterday and I quote it here in part: “Rats, I’m very sorry to bring you this sad news. Our friend and dedicated club member, Fred Kalish, died last night at his new home here in Port Townsend. I understand that Fred was home alone, collapsed there and was found this morning when he missed his pickleball date. I have no information about the cause of death, but we all know him as an active and healthy rower and willing volunteer in many community events. He’ll be sorely missed by many people in our community.” (Noah went on to say that people will informally gather this afternoon at the Pourhouse in Port Townsend at 4pm.)

He continued: “I know Fred had several interlocking communities of friends here in Port Townsend. If you know of others in his other circles, Pickleball, Marine Center, KPTZ, Northwind Arts, please extend the invitation to them. Noah”

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.