

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend WA. I'm Charlie Berman, bringing you news from the Jefferson County *Beacon* on Wednesday, May 22, 2024.

The process to fill the upcoming vacancy on the Port Townsend City Council is in place, with the council on Monday approving the steps to be taken to fill Position 2. The vacancy results from the resignation of council member Aislinn Palmer, who is moving to Seattle at the end of May. City Manager John Mauro presented three proposals to the council; expedited, balanced and thorough. The council approved a hybrid, modifying the balanced plan to accommodate expected schedules and to get someone in place two weeks prior to the 90-day deadline on August 31. If the city fails to reach a consensus, the decision will fall to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mayor David Faber told us that the council is trying to fill the seat "as soon as we can and still be responsible." He hopes that people who are interested in the seat will have enough notice and information to apply. On June 5, the council will approve the format and questions, opening up the application process the following week. Applications will be available online at the city website, with paper forms also made available. An executive session will then be scheduled during which time the council will select the finalists. A public interview process will take place in late July, with each finalist interviewed in public for 30 minutes. The council hopes that six people will make the cut. After deliberations and decisions and informing the community, it is expected that the new council member will be seated for the August 12 business meeting.

In a standard city council vote, four of the seven members must approve a motion. The majority will be the same in this case although there will only be six members participating in the vote. The process will be conducted in public, aside from the executive session. Faber said that applicants' names will be disclosed as soon as they apply for the position. Faber said that four people had already approached him with interest in the position, predicting that many more will emerge once the process begins. Palmer was first elected in 2021, with the term expiring in 2025. The replacement council member will then run for a full term in 2025 if they choose to do so.

There is another potential opening on the city council. Ben Thomas, who was elected along with Palmer in 2021, filed to run for the Jefferson County District 1 Commissioner seat. The process to replace Thomas will begin after Election Day, but only if he is elected as a commissioner.

The Jefferson County Emergency Shelter located at the American Legion Hall in Port Townsend may keep its doors open under new management. With the Olympic Community Action Program's contract coming to a close June 31, County Commissioner Greg Brotherton is now leading a coalition which includes the County, local faith groups, and housing nonprofits. So far, the group has met informally to discuss the future of the shelter, but Brotherton says he hopes to ratify their coalition and sign a contract with the American Legion in the next week.

The Community Outreach Association Shelter Team – or COAST – originally signed a contract for the shelter with the American Legion in 2006 with the intention that it be a temporary agreement during winter seasons only. Soon after, OlyCAP took over managing the shelter and began offering it as a year-round service in 2017. Brotherton said the shelter can operate more economically than in recent years, estimating that it can cost less than \$300,000 per year. Currently, the taxes the County collects to fund the shelter leave a \$7,000 deficit per month. To make do with a small staff, volunteers will be required. Leading by example, all the sitting county

commissioners have agreed to volunteer one night per month at the shelter, though they'll still need substantially more community support.

KPTZ broadcasts local news at noon and 5 pm Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from the Jefferson County *Beacon*. You can submit ideas to the *Beacon* through info@jeffcobeacon.com. This is Charlie Bermant. Thanks for listening.