

KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend WA. I'm Charlie Bermant, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

The Port Townsend School District has delayed a decision to partner with the Port Townsend Police Department to reinstate the School Resource Officer program after the sole candidate for the position withdrew his application. The program, which was paused in 2021 due to budget constraints, assigns a uniformed and armed officer to the elementary, middle, and high schools.

The school district supports the program because an officer will always be available to address any issue that arises at one of the schools. Without a dedicated officer, the school has to wait until one becomes available, and having an officer on campus gives the students a familiar, safe face. Not having a dedicated position results in different officers visiting multiple times a week, depending on who's available. In either case, the officer would not walk the halls, make arrests, or intervene in matters unless directed by the schools.

Opponents of the program cite the school-to-prison pipeline, racial bias, and a fear of students learning to unjustifiably trust the police outside of school. There is also a concern about having an officer in uniform with a firearm around students. According to police, the resource officer needs to be in full uniform; if they are called to an issue outside the school they need to be prepared. As no officer is currently interested in taking the position, the schools are seeking input from students, their families, and city officials to find the best solution for everyone. The city's newly formed Equity Access and Rights Advisory Panel is interested in the issue. It's not on any agenda, but people can address the issue during the public comment of its twice-monthly business meetings. The next regular meeting begins at 6:30pm this Monday, June 17.

The application process to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Port Townsend City Council member Aislinn Palmer continues. A link on the city's website connects to application materials and sample questions. Applications are open until July 5, with the finalists to be announced on July 15. Interviews and public meetings will follow. The city hopes that the new council member will be seated at the August 12 business meeting. To apply go to <https://cityofpt.us/citycouncil>.

As campaign season heats up, candidates for public office are looking to bring their message to the public. This week we report about several opportunities to connect with those who seek to represent us. Many are party-specific, but the most gratifying forums feature two candidates for a specific office. The League of Women Voters, long a sponsor of in-person debates, has switched to virtual events. This format allows the forums to reach more people with less organizational effort. New events are added weekly, for the current schedule go to <https://www.jeffcobeacon.com/all-news/the-long-run-9>.

Also in this week's issue of the *Beacon*, our food columnist Emily Henry discusses the range of locally grown produce outside of the usual vegetable suspects. Henry polled vendors at the Port Townsend Farmer's Market as to which vegetables need an explanation. They mentioned fava beans, pea shoots, and wine cap mushrooms, to name a few. But two turnip varieties stood out. One is kohlrabi, a Sputnik-looking vegetable described by one farmer as if broccoli, apples, and potatoes had a baby.

Another is the hakurei turnip. These small, white bulbs offer a sweet and mellow taste and are frequently mistaken for radishes. They have a delicate spiciness without the peppery bite. Henry writes that it can be intimidating to approach unfamiliar food, but can also be an exciting challenge. This community has an abundance of incredible farmers and produce; she advises us to get wild, step away from the normal shopping list, and go outside the comfort zone the next time you're shopping for groceries.

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. Thank you for listening.