

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. And I'm Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Tuesday, September 3, 2024.

The BOCC Public Health Report from Dr. Allison Berry was this morning at 9:45. Dr. Berry spoke about COVID-19 and the latest omicron variant KP-3 which is prevalent now in the community. The latest vaccine has the KP-2 variant in it which is closely related to KP-3 so it should provide good protection. Folks should not wait to get the vaccine, if you were thinking of waiting until around the holidays, especially if you are in a high-risk group (over 65 or immunocompromised). She said because it is so prevalent now that increasing protection with the vaccine is a good idea. If you have had Covid this summer, it's best to wait on getting the vaccine for two months past your last infection.

Willie Bence spoke to the Commissioners as well about the mop-up of the 2620 Road Fire and the fire risk level was lowered last week, which made charcoal barbecues possible for Labor Day weekend.

You can listen to their remarks and answers to KPTZ listener questions this afternoon at KPTZ.org.

In the *Peninsula Daily News* yesterday Port Townsend Public Works Director Steve King was pictured discussing ways to repair the broken sewer line that developed a sinkhole last Friday night on Water Street at the entrance to the Port Townsend ferry dock, with Talon Cameron of Seaton Construction, and Lane Dodson and Adam Fructas. Raw sewage continues to flow through the 70-year-old pipe and partially fills the hole. Plans were to make a temporary fix with a steel plate over the hole until more permanent repairs could be made.

KPTZ news contacted Steve King over the weekend and learned that there is funding available for repair of the aging sewer line which the City sought out after another break that occurred just a few blocks away last December. Steve King said the planned replacement of that crucial sewer line will commence this fall. As work continues on water street there is only one lane in each direction by the ferry terminal, so there might be slow downs and delays.

This is from the *Peninsula Daily News* today. The Port Angeles Police Department K-9 program has been identified as a beneficiary of Evelyn Beckwith's estate and will receive \$100,000 post probate. Beckwith's last will and testament stated that the money must be used for "the purpose of acquiring, training and maintaining K9 units for the Police Department." Sgt. Kevin Miller, who started the Port Angeles Police Department (PAPD) K-9 program, said he isn't aware of any connections between Beckwith and the program, although he hypothesized that she might have attended one of the program's dog demos. Miller said the donation "is going to help us in a lot of different ways." The PAPD currently has two fully equipped police K-9 vehicles and two K-9 teams: Miller and K-9 Bodie (a Belgian Malinois) and Officer Whitney Fairbanks and K-9 Copper (a German shepherd).

The PAPD is considering using the donation to add a third K-9 team to the department. Although the K-9 program is housed in the PAPD, Miller said it works with other teams to provide services to the whole Olympic Peninsula. If the program can acquire a third team, it can build a schedule with better coverage, he said. The funds also will likely be used to find a replacement for K-9 Bodie when both Miller and Bodie retire next year. The K-9 program is largely sustained through donations, Miller said, including an annual donation from the

Hurricane Ridge Kennel Club. During a typical year, Miller said the program spends between \$3,500 and \$4,000 on each dog. That includes two canine seminars, food, and standard vet visits.

To travel and purchase a new dog, the program usually spends between \$8,000 and \$12,000. After that, the dog still has to be trained. The K-9 teams are mainly deployed as a locating tool to find suspects, primarily violent felons. Miller said, “When we get the dog, he doesn’t even know how to sit,” And he continued, “It’s kind of like, when people have problems, they call 911, but when the cops lose them [the suspects], they call us. You can build all the computers you want, [but] there’s still no app for scenting or olfaction.”

That is where the dogs come in, using their noses to find suspects or evidence, such as drugs or guns, that the suspects discarded. The two PAPD K-9 units are part of a larger coalition of about 12 K-9 teams that train biweekly and provide support across the region. Miller is the master trainer for this region, which includes Grays Harbor County, Kitsap County, Jefferson County, and Clallam County.

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.