

This is KPTZ 91.9FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nigel O'Shea bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

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After taking time to consider public opinion and the limited police resources, the city council voted to give the city manager the power to sign an agreement between the Port Townsend Police Department and the Port Townsend School District to hire a School Liaison Officer (SLO) instead of the initially proposed School Resource Officer. The SLO will be one officer assigned to the schools but will not be embedded in the schools full time. Instead, they will be the primary officer making site visits, responding to calls from the schools, and fulfilling any other legal requirements the school may have for law enforcement.

One other marked change is that the SLO will not be in the school without first reporting to the office and staff, and students will be made aware when the officer is in the school. At public meetings parents were concerned about an armed, uniformed police officer being routinely present in the school. The school district's hope is that the SLO program will not require that students interact with the officer if they do not feel comfortable doing so. This comes after the Port Townsend School District delayed a decision to partner with the Port Townsend Police Department to reinstate the School Resource Officer program after the candidate for the position withdrew his application in June.

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Though Farm Tour weekend was rainy and cold, the spirits were high at Beaver Valley's Gray Fox Farm. When the farm was put on the market last month, owner Laurae Hughes didn't think it would be possible to raise enough money to buy the land she had been farming for the past six years. Thankfully, friends and community members believed in her vision for the property and she was able to raise the money to buy out her former partner. Hughes, a veteran and an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, is focused on using indigenous practices to revive the soil, plants, and animals on her land. Hughes said, "Farms will measure success by what you're able to put in the bank. I measure my success as to what this place is now. When I first got here, we found rolls of carpet and trash belching up out of the ground. The canary grass had strangled everything. There was no native anything left."

Her hard work to bring back the native plants and promote soil quality has paid off. The farm is a beautiful mix of cultivated and wild spaces, with native pollinators sharing space alongside European honeybees. There is room for all at Gray Fox Farm, a sentiment that resonated with enough people to help secure its future. Hughes said, "The way I was raised, weak and lazy are four letter words. I felt like if I needed to ask for help, I shouldn't be doing what I was doing. I think this is a fallacy that a lot of us grew up with. I got to the point where I realized if I don't ask for help, I'm going to lose the farm, because the option that was being presented to me, I was not going to be able to attain on my own."

Thankfully, Hughes didn't have to come up with the money on her own. Friends helped throw her a fundraiser and set up a GoFundMe campaign, and many people in the Chimacum farming community made sure to keep sharing her story. Though she was supported by so many people, it still wasn't enough to cover the cost of buying the farm and the property went on the market earlier this month. Then, thanks to the support of anonymous donors, Hughes was able to buy the property outright, signing the quick deed on the Friday before the farm tour. Though it is obviously a huge relief to have the future of her farm secured, there is still an incredible amount of work to be done both in the short and long terms.

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First Step Family Support Center presents: Winter Coats for Kids 2 to 4:30 on Thursday, September 19 at Jefferson County Public Health, 615 Sheridan Street in Port Townsend. Choose a new, free coat for your child. Sizes include infant to youth 14/16. Available while supplies last. For more information or to donate new coats call 360-457-8355 or send an email to [info@FirstStepFamilySupport.org](mailto:info@FirstStepFamilySupport.org).

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September is Recovery Month and the Nest, in collaboration with Jefferson County Public Health, is hosting a Narcan training and movie night, featuring Seattle based film *A New High*, Friday, September 20 from 5 to 7:30pm. It's a free, community event welcome to all at the Nest, 1119 Lawrence St., Port Townsend, WA 98368.

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Have a knack for writing, or a unique point of view? Are there news beats in Washington and Jefferson County that you think need more attention? Are there plain truths that need to be said but our community is ignoring? Maybe the Beacon is a place for your voice. The Jefferson County *Beacon* is looking for contributors to bring news, events and culture from all parts of Jefferson County and beyond. Tell us your stories, inquire about writing for the Beacon at [info@jeffcobeacon.com](mailto:info@jeffcobeacon.com).

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturdays, partnering on Wednesdays to bring you stories from the *Jefferson County Beacon*. You can submit ideas to the *Beacon* through [info@jeffcobeacon.com](mailto:info@jeffcobeacon.com). This is Nigel O'Shea and thanks for listening.