

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM on your dial in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Berman with news and commentary for Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Three of the seven seats on the Port Townsend City Council are open this year. Of the incumbents, the recently appointed Position 2 council member Neil Nelson said he is definitely running for a full term. Libby Wennstrom, Position 5, and Ben Thomas, Position 1, are both undecided, with Thomas telling KPTZ that he is leaning against running for a second term.

If an incumbent isn't running, they owe it to the voters to disclose that as soon as possible in order to give other candidates a chance to prepare, as many people are reluctant to run against an incumbent. Thomas said he wanted to scope out who may replace him before making a decision whether to run again. For this reason, he is inviting people considering taking the plunge to talk to him about the issues. If he meets someone he likes he will endorse them and again become a full-time businessman and family man.

Port Townsend Mayors generally serve four years, or two terms. By this measure Mayor David Faber is coming to the end of his tenure. It would be rare for a mayor to run for a third term, and Faber has expressed reluctance about the idea of continuing in that position. We talked to all of the city council members asking them if they wanted the position of mayor and who should take it on. None of them want to be mayor.

In the past, the mayor and a deputy mayor serve together, with the deputy mayor ascending to the top job after two terms. Deputy Mayor Amy Howard, like Faber, said she is not interested in the position. "Do I want to be mayor? No," she said. "Who should be mayor? Me, probably. But I don't want it." Wennstrom said she is not interested in the position due to her day job working for Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown. She hopes that Faber will consent to serve another term saying as the meeting facilitator, the Mayor's role is better filled by someone who's been on council for some time. There's a pretty steep learning curve," she said. Faber didn't completely rule out another term but indicated that it would be a considerable personal sacrifice.

Monica Mick Hager, Position 3, Owen Rowe, Position 4 and Nelson all deferred the question, saying that it will be decided when the new council convenes in January. At that point there could be three new members, who would be unlikely candidates. Mick Hager said she does not want to be mayor but would like to see a change in leadership from the Faber/Howard team.

So we need people to get off of the couch and onto the City Council. The 2025 Candidate Filing Period will open Monday, May 5 at 8am and close Friday, May 9 at 5pm. There are three ways a candidate may file: online, by mail, or in person. The Jefferson County Auditor is encouraging candidates to file online as that is easy, fast, safe, and secure. Online filing can be done 24 hours a day during the aforementioned filing period. When filing, candidates must be registered in the district for which they are filing, which for council is the Port Townsend City Limits, where they must have resided for at least a year. For more information go to the Auditor's website (<https://co.jefferson.wa.us/1268/For-Candidate-Filing>) or call 360-385-9117.

Saturday's Port Townsend's Hands Off demonstration drew a crowd that stretched along Sims Way from Safeway to the Kearny Street Roundabout. People waved signs and made noise, indicating a displeasure with President Donald Trump and his policies. Mark Welch, who operated a drone, estimated the crowd at about 1,700 people – about 5% of Jefferson County's population. It was a small part of the estimated one million

people who joined the protest around the world. It was the largest protest in recent Port Townsend history, tripling the 600 people who gathered at the Jefferson County Courthouse in February.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm Tuesday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. I'm Charlie Berman. Thank you for listening.