

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nhatt Nichols, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, June 11, 2025.

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The Bayside Overnight Emergency Shelter at the American Legion has been funded by the City/County Housing Fund Board (the HFB) through the end of the year. The Emergency Shelter Funding Review meeting discussed the extension of shelter operations through December 31, 2025 with Bayside and the American Legion. The Overnight Emergency Shelter currently hosts 30-35 guests nightly. HFB will cover the remaining \$85,000 for the shelter while it is at the American Legion and will fund the shelter through the first quarter of 2026 if the new construction at Caswell Brown isn't ready to receive residents.

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In other low-income housing news, the owner of the Olympic Village mobile home park near Four Corners has reiterated to tenants that he intends to raise lot fees at a much higher rate than the newly passed Washington state legislation allows. Don Tucker, the owner of the Olympic Village, sent a letter to renters dated May 24, 2025, stating that the monthly rent for the space on mobile homes site would be raised from \$590 to \$790. The legal ground on which Tucker is asserting his right to demand increased rent appears uncertain. He filed a legal notice of the rent increase in August 2024, according to Sam Wilton, Chief Financial Officer of Park Manager, LLC, which owns Olympic Village. The effective implementation date was set for June 1, 2025.

Then, Governor Ferguson signed the rental cap bill into law on May 7, effective on that date. The law, House Bill 1217, restricts manufactured home rent increases to 5%. It also caps residential rent hikes during a 12-month period at 7% plus inflation, or 10%, whichever is lower. The limit will last 15 years, though the manufactured home limit has no expiration date. Wilton said that the Washington State Attorney General's office is working on an advisory note for landlords that should settle the issue of the rent increase. The uncertainty that the large rent increase has caused Olympic Village residents during the past 10 months has been compounded by the pending negotiations over the sale of the property.

The *Beacon* has learned that two nonprofit organizations have been in earnest discussions with the seller for more than 18 months, according to Victoria O'Banion, Marketing and Acquisitions Specialist of Olympia-based ROC Northwest, one of the two organizations. ROC Northwest is focused on building affordable housing through cooperative ownership in Washington and Northern Idaho. The other organization, Jefferson County-based Bayside Housing, provides safe, stable housing for people, most of whom would otherwise be homeless. For now, uncertainty continues for Olympic Village residents.

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And finally, queer joy was in tangible abundance at this year's Pride festival in Port Townsend. The celebration included boat parades, drag shows, poetry, and a market, all enjoyed by hundreds of LGBTQ+ people and their allies. This year's celebrations felt especially poignant as both the federal government and, closer to home, the Quilcene School Board have enacted policies to discriminate against transgender people.

Poet and Pride performer Turner Masland expressed the importance of gathering for joy as well as for protest. "I think it's vital for us to gather as a queer family to celebrate our joy and our resiliency after many, many, many generations of oppression and continued attempts to force us back into the closet. It's vital for queer and trans folk to gather and dance and laugh and raise our fists and remind everyone that we've always been here and we ain't going nowhere."

Davy Mack-Hazelwood, who plays Bobby Lee as one half of the Jefferson County drag duo Bobby4bobby, was on the entertainment planning committee, as well as performing and organizing the Country Queers entertainment block. “It was really important for everyone on the committee that there was a lot of local representation, not just from Port Townsend, but from the greater the greater County. And it really felt like that happened this year and so it felt really special.”

Mack-Hazelwood also emphasized the role the Production Alliance and volunteers played in creating a Pride celebration that brought joy safely to everyone.

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