

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Port Townsend City Council held its first meeting of the new year last night and began by electing Amy Howard as Mayor and Owen Rowe as Deputy Mayor. New City Attorney Austin Watkins was introduced, and new council members Fred Obee, Libby Wennstrom, and Neil Nelson were sworn in. New police officers Nestor Escalante and Sofian Hammou were also sworn in, and Sergeant Kamal Sharif was officially promoted to Deputy Chief of Police.

In addition, Poet Rufina Garay was welcomed and officially proclaimed Port Townsend's Poet Laureate for the years 2026 and 27.

City Manager John Mauro noted that work has begun for the new sidewalk that will be coming to Washington and Walker Streets. Designed to improve pedestrian access from Sims Way to the Jefferson County Courthouse and uptown, the project will require a detour until the end of February, so you may wish to allow more time if traveling through this area.

Demolition of the Sanderling Building at 1136 Water Street will also begin this week. The sidewalk will be closed during the demolition phase, with signage and barriers in place to ensure pedestrian safety. Following demolition and prior to the start of construction, an alternate protected pedestrian route will be constructed within the on-street parking spaces in front of the building to safely redirect foot traffic around the site for the duration of the build-out. Construction of a hotel in this location is expected to be complete by early 2027.

Jefferson County Public Health and Jefferson Transit Authority have installed free Naloxone Cabinets at the Haines Place Park and Ride and the Four Corners Park and Ride, bringing the number of free Naloxone stations to 12, several of which are available 24/7. Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose; access to naloxone can save a life. To find your nearest free naloxone station, visit <https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1752/Harm-Reduction-Services>.

Jefferson County Solid Waste has a new fee schedule as of January 2. There's now a \$20 minimum fee for all transactions at the Transfer Station on Jacob Miller Road, and a \$10 minimum fee for the Quilcene Drop Box. The Transfer Station also now has a live stream video camera so you can check for a line before you go. For a link to the video and more information on the new fees visit <https://jeffersoncountysolidwaste.com/>.

Several area residents participated in a pop-up rally this weekend. The participants, who lined up along Sims Way on Saturday afternoon, were there to protest President Trump's actions in ousting the president of Venezuela. According to the Washington State *Standard*, Trump has made it clear the secret military operation is primarily related to securing oil, having stated in a press conference that petroleum companies would finance the rebuilding of Venezuela's oil infrastructure, and that the United States will "run the country" of Venezuela until "a proper transition can take place."

While the stock market has risen in response to the military strike's effect on the oil industry, the strike has drawn strong rebukes from Democratic lawmakers, who say the action superseded Congress' authority to declare war. Republicans in Congress have stood by the president's decision, however, claiming the capture of Venezuelan president Maduro and his wife was justified.

And finally, flu cases are on the rise on the Peninsula, according to Dr. Allison Berry, our public health officer. While getting the flu vaccine may not prevent your getting the flu, it will reduce both the likelihood of getting flu and the severity of symptoms if you do get the flu.

RSV is also on the rise and can be particularly dangerous for infants and the elderly. Dr. Berry definitely recommends RSV vaccination for both ends of the age spectrum. The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that she has also expressed concerns over federal changes to the childhood vaccination schedule, stating that modeling the US vaccination schedule after Denmark does not make sense as Denmark has free healthcare and the two countries face different public health realities.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.