

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, February 3, 2026.

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets nationwide this past weekend as anti-ICE protests continue. Here in Port Townsend, the Haines Place Park and Ride filled quickly on Saturday as a large and noisy group of citizens gathered along Sims Way to protest the ICE actions. Colorful signs abounded, there were folks drumming on buckets, and the Unexpected Brass Band performed.

Meanwhile, back in Washington DC, Senate democrats, angered by the shootings in Minneapolis, amended the government funding package Friday evening. Because President Trump has agreed to two weeks of negotiations on the DHS bill, which includes funding for immigration enforcement agencies, the package the Senate approved only continues funding for the Department of Homeland Security for the next two weeks.

But with the House in recess until yesterday evening, the current spending law, which Congress approved in November, expired without a replacement. As a result, the federal government began a partial shutdown early Saturday. The resulting funding lapse will affect not only the DHS, but also the departments of Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, State, Transportation, and Treasury, as well as the Executive Office of the President, Supreme Court and the judicial branch. All other federal programs will continue uninterrupted, since their appropriations bills have already been passed.

In related news, one of those appropriations bills the House of Representatives has already passed included funding for two projects in Jefferson County. Jefferson Healthcare will receive \$1 million to construct a new patient imaging project, and the Hoh Indian Tribe will receive \$3.15 million to construct an evacuation and community center in Forks to protect residents in the event of extreme weather or a tsunami.

The Quilcene School Board has successfully rescinded the board's May 2025 resolution to prevent transgender athletes from competing in school sports. Before the Quilcene board passed its May resolution, its legal counsel warned it could face litigation, but state and federal governments remain at odds over how transgender athletes should be treated in school sports. Washington's anti-discrimination law bans discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression in public schools, but last week, the secretary of state's office verified an initiative that would require student athletes to undergo a physical examination prior to participation in interscholastic sports, which would include medically verified documentation of the student's sex assigned at birth.

At the same time, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, but whether Title IX applies to gender identity is currently under review by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Board member Richard Fitzgerald made the motion to rescind the resolution an hour into the Board's January 21 board meeting. After discussion, board member Naomi Stern seconded the motion, and the resolution passed with a 3-2 vote.

The TAX-AIDE program, co-sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service and AARP, is a nation-wide free service for low-and-middle income taxpayers of all ages. Their tax assistance will be available in three area locations from February 2 to April 14.

- Appointments are available at the Port Townsend Community Center on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am to 2pm. You can make an appointment by calling 360-302-2056.
- Appointments are also available at the Quilcene Community Center on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. You can make an appointment there by calling 360-302-2340.
- And finally, the third location locally is the Tri-Area Community Center in Chimacum, which is available for appointments on Mondays and Thursdays, from noon to 4pm. You can make an appointment there by calling 360-504-8882.

To make appointments online for any of these locations see <https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp-taxaide/locations/>.

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.