

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, February 25, 2026.

For more than a decade, Olympic Community Action Partnerships (OlyCAP) has managed the Brinnon and Quilcene Community Centers with little public debate. But as the clock ticked toward the February 13 deadline for contract bids, a local chamber of commerce mounted a challenge and demanded answers about where county dollars have gone.

The North Hood Canal Chamber of Commerce (NHCCC) submitted a formal bid on February 12 to take over operations of both centers, citing years of frustration over what it describes as a lack of transparency, unenforced contract requirements, and a county procurement process that has left key financial questions unanswered.

Now, OlyCAP is responding directly to those concerns, defending its record while acknowledging at least one area in which it fell short of contractual obligations. The current conflict has been three years in the making. When OlyCAP's contract came up for renewal in 2023, a group of community members led by Dan Ventura, now president of the NHCCC, raised concerns about whether the nonprofit was fulfilling its contractual obligations. They asked Jefferson County commissioners to enforce the terms or consider alternative management. Ventura recalled, "We got a lot of pushback. At the time of renewal, I asked, 'Can you at least assure me that this time you'll enforce the things that are in the contract?' The answer I got was no. The county wouldn't assure us they'd enforce it."

The contract was renewed anyway, for three more years. But Ventura and others didn't back down. They spent the intervening years building the chamber into an organization capable of bidding for the contracts themselves. Pressure from the NHCCC and other community members eventually led the county to issue a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) in October 2025 – the first time in years the contracts had been openly competed. However, the process quickly stalled.

The NHCCC submitted questions seeking basic financial data, including utility costs, maintenance expenses, current budgets and an inventory of center contents. Without that information, Ventura said, it was impossible to prepare a responsible bid. He said, "We haven't received any financial reports from the county. It's a black box as to what's being done with that money."

Holly Morgan, who joined OlyCAP in July 2024, pushed back on the notion that financial information has been withheld and clarified that some records have, in fact, been shared. She said, "As far as I am aware, there has been only one area in which we have not operated wholly adherent to the terms and that is in the area of having an advisory board in place for each center." After Morgan joined the organization in 2024, she said she noted the deficiency and engaged with community members to resume advisory board functions, this time with "carefully articulated roles and responsibilities to avoid the misunderstandings that caused the friction to begin with." The centers serve as vital hubs in rural south Jefferson County, hosting everything from food bank operations to senior programs, youth activities, and community gatherings. Under the agreement, OlyCAP was responsible for day-to-day operations, programming, and maintenance of the county-owned facilities.

The community center contracts are landing on county officials' desks at a precarious moment. In December 2025, Jefferson County administrators warned of significant budget shortfalls and signaled that difficult choices lie ahead. Morgan argued that OlyCAP is uniquely positioned to supplement the county's financial investment into the centers – pointing to the organization's use of Community Services Block Grant funding, donations, and grants to expand programming. For fiscal year 2025, OlyCAP allocated a significant portion of those funds

to providing free hot meals for seniors at community centers. For 2026, the organization has matched county dollars with additional funds to support “Community Center growth and improvements.”

Morgan also highlighted planned expansions: youth programming, senior services, a Housing Case Manager, and Energy Assistance Program case workers available in both Brinnon and Quilcene, as well as partnerships with Peninsula College and WSU for adult education. NHCCC, meanwhile, has centered its campaign on transparency and community voice. With bids now submitted, Jefferson County faces a decision that will reverberate through Brinnon and Quilcene for years. The county is expected to review proposals in the coming weeks, with a new contract set to begin April 1, 2026.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Tuesday through Thursday partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from the Jefferson County *Beacon*. This is Nigel O’Shea, thanks for listening.