

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 26, 2026.

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The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) reports that a 65-year-old man who apparently fell out of his dinghy sometime last Thursday has been found dead. According to the United States Coast Guard, the man took off from North Beach and was last seen on the dinghy near Point Wilson Thursday evening, but an unmanned dinghy was spotted around 7:45pm, so a report went out of a possible man overboard. Crews from the JCSO, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Jefferson Search and Rescue, Island County Sheriff's Office, the Coast Guard, and the Royal Canadian Air Force searched for over 17 hours, covering over 715 miles until around 4pm on Friday, when the man was found dead on a Whidbey Island beach. Officials said the incident remains under investigation.

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According to the *Leader*, the Winter Welcoming Center has apparently been getting mixed messages as to whether they will be able to re-open in November. Julia Cochrane, founder and director of the Jefferson Interfaith Action Coalition (JIAC), which operates the Center, met with Community Services Director Melody Sky Weaver and facilities manager Michael Todd in May and were told they might not be able to reopen unless the code was updated. According to staff, the city updated its code in 2023 to prohibit emergency indoor day-use shelters like the center to operate in mixed public, infrastructure, and open space zones, such as the Pope Marine Building. The change was made "because of incompatibility with public parks" and because of the zone's definition, according to the city.

Todd also added that a Good Neighbor Agreement – informing neighboring properties of facility hours, services, and a designated point of contact – would also have to be signed. But days later, Planning Director Emma Bolin told the *Leader* those changes would only be necessary if the JIAC wanted to extend its months of operation beyond what is allowed under its current conditional use permit (CUP). In an email to the *Leader* on May 19, Sky Weaver explained that the Center can re-open from December 2026 to March of 2027 under the terms of the CUP. Given the original deal was from November to April, Cochrane says the confusion continues, and she's in conversation with city councilors.

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According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, the Board of Jefferson County Commissioners is working on drafting an artificial intelligence policy to provide governance on how AI is being used in the county. The policy also addresses the security and containment of sensitive data, the blocking of unauthorized platforms, and standards for public attribution and transparency when using AI tools. Central Services Director Shawn Frederick notes that there are about 80 AI tools already in use within the county's system, embedded in many of the systems the county uses every day, such as Microsoft Copilot, which is embedded in Office 365, and Gemini, which is in Google. Due to its complexity, the policy is still a work in progress. A revised draft is likely to return to the board on June 8.

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Jefferson County Public Health has announced that due to changes in federal funding the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits in Washington state have been severely reduced, and that those available to the county have been reduced by over 60% this year. In order that these limited benefits may be equitably allocated, they will be distributed electronically rather than at the Farmers Market, while supplies last, to a randomly

generated list of WIC participants. Recipients will be notified by June 5 if their name has been drawn to receive benefits. For more information, contact the Public Health office at 360-385-9432.

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And finally, Jeffco Repair will offer a free community repair fest at the Jefferson County Library in Port Hadlock, this coming Saturday from 10am to 1pm. People with repair skills will not only be on hand to fix your broken toaster or mend the holes in your sweater, they'll also show you how they did it and teach you how to do it yourself next time!

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