

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, July 22, 2026.

City Council convened on July 20, 2026, for a regular meeting that centered on significant infrastructure improvements and a notable leadership transition. The council unanimously approved two resolutions seeking state funding for critical sewer projects and discussed a memorandum of understanding with Jefferson County for a new lift station.

In his opening remarks, City Manager John Mauro announced he has accepted a position as City Manager of Bainbridge Island and will be finishing his tenure in Port Townsend. Mauro mentioned that a special city council workshop is scheduled for Monday, July 27, to discuss the transition and the city's next steps.

The meeting featured significant discussion on two major wastewater infrastructure initiatives, with the council authorizing loan applications for both.

The council approved Resolution 2615, authorizing an application for up to \$2.17 million in loan funding for the remaining design and construction of the Holcomb and Wilson Street sewer upsizing project. Project Manager Mike Connelly explained the project is crucial for addressing a capacity bottleneck in the city's sewer system that serves the Rainier subarea, which is planned for future housing and commercial development. Staff highlighted that the project's scope has been refined to be more cost-effective and placed within the city right-of-way to reduce construction risks.

The council also approved Resolution 2616, authorizing an application for up to \$780,000 in loan funding for the planning and pre-construction of the Monroe Street Lift Station rehabilitation project. Project Manager Andre Harper reported that the lift station, originally built in 1965, requires an upgrade to meet future capacity demands and replace aging components. A lift station is what is used to pump waste water or sewage from a lower to a higher elevation.

Director of Public Works Steve King noted that the city is seeking low-interest loans from the Public Works Board. While planning for a 100% loan, King noted that previous projects have seen up to 50% loan forgiveness due to the city's status as a "distressed" area. He emphasized that the work is already accounted for in the city's rate models and general sewer plan, and these applications are for projects that must be completed to ensure the city meets regulatory requirements.

In other business, the council authorized the city manager to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Jefferson County regarding the siting and location of a new lift station on Mill Road to serve the urban growth area. The MOU commits the county to sell the necessary property and easements to the city, and the city to build the lift station to serve the area. Public Works Director King explained the location is critical, as it is the lowest point, allowing for gravity-fed sewer connections for the entire urban growth area.

The Mill Road Lift Station project is a key piece of infrastructure designed to unlock the potential of the Evans Vista neighborhood, a significant housing development on a 14-acre site northwest of the Port Townsend Paper Mill. The property, which currently lacks sewer service, is planned to include hundreds of mixed housing units, with the first phase alone comprising 150 apartments, walk-ups, and townhomes. By providing the necessary wastewater conveyance, the lift station will enable this major affordable housing project, which is required to have at least 25% of its units remain permanently affordable. The lift station would also serve the Caswell

Brown property, extend along Discovery Rd to the Rainier Street roundabout, and later help bring sewer infrastructure to Glen Cove.

The project is being supported by substantial external funding, including a \$1.7 million grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce and \$4.1 million from the Environmental Protection Agency. The city began selecting an engineering firm to provide design services in 2024, including environmental permitting and the creation of an Engineering Design Report.

Following the public meeting, the council adjourned into a 30-minute executive session to discuss current or potential litigation with legal counsel, as permitted by state law. No action was to follow the session.

Want the Beacon for free in your inbox every week? Go to <https://www.jeffcobeacon.com/> and sign up with your email address at the bottom of the page.

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, thank you so much for listening.