

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, August 4, 2026.

Port Townsend City Council has begun the process of searching for a new city manager. The first topic to be addressed is the appointment of an interim city manager. Public Works Director Steve King was suggested as a possible internal candidate, although according to the *Peninsula Daily News*, support was also given to opening the interim role up for applicants from among all city department heads. But attention must also be given to updating the job description, given the changes in the community over the last 8 years.

The council is also considering hiring a recruitment firm to help with the search, and some council members have suggested limiting the candidate search to Washington or the Pacific Northwest. But all were in agreement that the next step will be to hire an interim city manager, preferably before Mauro's last day.

Wildfires swept into Spokane, Washington's second largest city, on Saturday, with three separate fires scorching more than 10,000 acres and destroying over 700 structures. No deaths have been reported, but more than 60,000 people are currently under evacuation orders. The Spokane County Sheriff's Office has charged a suspect with arson in connection with one of the fires. The 37-year-old man, a convicted felon, was arrested without incident and has been booked into Spokane County jail.

California Interagency Incident Management Team 7 took command of the Spokane fires on Sunday; Tom Clemo, the team's incident commander, said the Autumn Lane Fire was especially active late Sunday and into Monday, and that tens of thousands of structures remained threatened. Monday night's update showed the Autumn Lane Fire had become the largest of the three, at around 5,600 acres.

With over 20 wildfires raging across the state, the National Weather Service has issued a Particularly Dangerous Situation alert, reserved for the worst fire weather conditions, and Governor Ferguson has officially declared a statewide emergency and imposed a statewide burn ban. The state has also submitted a request for short-term emergency assistance from the federal government and plans to seek longer-term disaster relief as well as help with search and rescue, housing and food assistance, and debris removal.

Fortunately fire risk in Jefferson County, though high, has not risen to very high or extreme, but wildfire smoke from Eastern Washington fires may affect the Olympic Peninsula this week. For up-to-date information about smoke levels, visit <https://www.airnow.gov/>.

In related news, two firefighters from Brinnon have been assigned to provide medical support for the crews working on the Skyo fire near Packwood. That fire is currently estimated at 253 acres and is 38% contained. This deployment continues Brinnon Fire Department's partnership with the Western Washington Type 3 Incident Management Team, a relationship built during previous assignments on the 2620 Road Fire and the Maple Fire.

WSDOT has announced that construction on another fish passage site on the Olympic Peninsula is about to begin. Starting tomorrow, August 5, travelers will see one-way alternating traffic on State Route 116 between

Shotwell Place and Chimacum Creek Drive, as crews prepare the site at Chimacum Creek for fish barrier removal, a long-term closure that will be around the clock for approximately two months. During this time, crews will prepare the site at Chimacum Creek for construction and a long-term closure. The closure will be around the clock for approximately two months. During the closure, a signed detour will be provided. WSDOT will announce the closure date as soon as it is confirmed. For more information about the road closure, visit <https://wsdot.com/Travel/Real-time/Map/>.

As of yesterday, Anderson Lake has been closed until Fall for renovations to its entrance, parking, restrooms, and trails. The result will be year round road access, a new bike path, an equestrian loading area, upgraded restroom, and a paved and boardwalk connector trail linking Port Townsend trails to the Olympic Discovery Trail.

And finally, just a reminder from the city: the parking lot at Port Townsend Plaza is owned and managed by the Hall Equities Group, not the city. For questions or concerns about parking fees, citations, and other details around parking in that lot, please contact Hall Equities Group at 925-933-4000 or by emailing info@hallequitiesgroup.com.

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, and don't forget to vote!