

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, September 17, 2020.

\*\*\*

Here are today's statistics: Jefferson County's COVID 19 case number remains at 71, with 13 people awaiting test results. Port Townsend's air quality index is reported at 90, by [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov), but other reports range from 71 to 130. But there is no doubt that the quality is improving.

\*\*\*

County and city electeds last night met virtually to discuss proposals put forth by community groups for funding through Coronavirus Relief Funds.

The County Commissioners, City Council members, PUD commissioners and the Port of Port Townsend Commissioners- the Intergovernmental Collaborative Group- weighed in on programs that ranged from social services, jobs, food, broadband, to the arts

According to a press release County Administrator Philip Morley said the County has approximately \$663,000 of Coronavirus Relief Funds to spend for these allocations.

Port Townsend City Manager John Mauro said the City will receive \$144,100 and "instead of doing this separately, it made sense to do this together."

.Every elected had an opportunity to comment. There was no consensus, other than to compliment the efforts of the various committee members. The proposals taken together would cost more than the amount of funding available.

No action was taken during the three-hour meeting. The County Commissioners will discuss the proposals in detail Monday during their regular meeting. The Port Townsend City Council will decide how to spend its funds after the BOCC makes its determination.

\*\*\*

Two weeks ago it appeared that it couldn't get much worse, but that was before smoke hit and forced a double quarantine. The respective reactions to COVID 19 and vad dangerous are provide a challenge, as managing exposure to smoky air is at odds with the advice given about how to protect yourself from COVID-19. Opening windows and being outside in the fresh air isn't recommended right now.

County Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke urged residents to limit their exposure to the unhealthy air as much as possible. He also said that cooking fumes and aerosols can contribute to unhealthy air quality inside your homes.

The Department of Emergency Management will be providing N-95 masks for the homeless.

DEM has also been tasked with developing an emergency plan to open a Fresh Air Center for the homeless where they can be indoors during the day and out of the toxic soup.

\*\*\*

Some elected officials have cited poor forest management as a cause for the forest fires, an assertion with which Washington Governor Jay Inslee disagrees.

In a recent press conference Inslee said that their cause is not from a lack of forest management practices, rather they are attributable to climate change. Washington fires have burned not only

hundreds of thousands of acres of forests, but also areas of dry grass and sagebrush in Eastern Washington — a different type of fuel. He termed these conflagrations “Climate Fires,” and said they are due to extreme dryness, wind and a lack of humidity.

Inslee joins the governors of California and Oregon in attributing the fire emergency to climate change.

\*\*\*

In other Inslee news, the Governor posted on Facebook that Washington is tied for second in Census self-response rate, encouraging those who have not yet responded to do so as census response can help our region secure crucial federal funding.

In an apparent sports reference, he added that response “can also help us beat Wisconsin.”

According to the Census Bureau web site Washington is actually in fourth place, with an impressive 97.8 percent response rate behind Idaho, West Virginia and Hawaii. But that posting is from earlier this week. The governor may have access to newer information.

For information about the census or to participate go to [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov).

\*\*\*

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm PM Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news at [kptz.org](https://kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.