

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, January 7, 2021.

Our own representative Derek Kilmer is one of many congressional voices who have called for the invocation of the 25th Amendment and the immediate removal of President Donald Trump from office. In a statement, Kilmer said the president is manifestly unfit for office and that his actions on Wednesday incited violence against our representative democracy. Kilmer said that Trump is not in a position to lead during the remaining weeks of his term and that the government needs to act in order to prevent any further damage.

The process, according to the *Washington Post*, is complicated. It requires the vice president to take the initiative, with support from a simple majority of the cabinet and a two thirds majority in both houses of congress. There are a lot of moving parts, the details of which are described in several of today's news stories. In the days leading up to the election certification, our fearless leader stated that Vice President Mike Pence held the keys to our democracy's future. It was then an erroneous statement, but is now true after what transpired yesterday.

Yesterday's news knocked COVID-19 off of the front page, only temporarily. Jefferson County reported four new cases of the virus yesterday, bringing the total to 237. Fifty four people are awaiting test results, with 22 active cases now in isolation.

In the meantime, the public is waiting for its vaccination opportunity. We are still in the first phase for the next few weeks, with first responders, health care personnel and residential care facilities in process. The next phase, expected in late January, will vaccinate people older than 70 and those over 50 who live in multigenerational households.

In February, vaccinations will be offered to high risk workers over 50 who are employed in certain congregate settings: Agriculture; food processing; grocery stores; K-12 (teachers and school staff); childcare; corrections, prisons, jails or detention facilities (staff); public transit; fire personnel and law enforcement.

Those next in line will be announced as soon as their eligibility is established. In the meantime, the State Health Department is rolling out PhaseFinder, an online portal that determines vaccine eligibility and to book appointments for those qualifying. People will be encouraged to go online, input information on age and occupation to determine when they can get their vaccination. The website has a complicated direct link (<https://wadoh.jotform.com/203418436942154>), so you can find it by searching for Washington Department of Health Covid Eligibility. The message is to sit tight and wait for your turn. Health authorities are urging people to not contact local hospitals or health providers with availability questions, instead logging onto the Washington Department of Health website for the latest information.

Earlier this week Governor Jay Inslee announced that reopening facilities will use a regional approach rather than setting a schedule for each county. For this, Jefferson is grouped with Clallam, Kitsap, and Mason Counties.

In a Facebook post, Jefferson County Commissioner Kate Dean said she recognizes the need for such a move but feels that it could adversely affect local efforts. The details are still undetermined, so she is working along

with County Health Officer Tom Locke to help shape it on a state level. She said that Jefferson stands to lose a lot by being lumped together with three other Counties. Under such a system our re-opening is linked to theirs, and while we have consistently been in the lowest 2-5 counties in the state for infection rates by following the rules, we will be held to our neighboring counties rates, which fluctuate daily and are in many times worse than ours. Additionally, regions will likely be assigned a health officer to share, and they will be employees of the state. So Dr. Locke could be re-assigned and we would instead have someone in Kitsap who may or may not completely understand Jefferson County.

Port Townsend's Parks, Recreation and Community Services director Alex Wisniewski is leaving his position to become the new director of the Kitsap County Parks Department. His last day is tomorrow. Wisniewski, a resident of North Kitsap, has worked for Port Townsend's Parks, Recreation and Community Services since 2014 and as director since 2017, managing a \$2 million operating budget and staff of over 30. During his tenure, he led the update of the city's parks, recreation, and open space plan, oversaw maintenance for city hall and other facilities, and supervised community volunteer projects and partnerships, according to a press release.

In Kitsap County, he will manage the county's more than 60 parks, greenways, and open spaces, totaling nearly 11,000 acres, in addition to the Kitsap County Fairgrounds and Events center and other community recreation facilities. Wisniewski told KPTZ that the selection of his replacement is in process, but it is not yet listed on the city's employment website. The priority is the recruitment of a new police chief, for which the finalists are scheduled to meet the public next week.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.