

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, April 15, 2021.

Port Townsend's City Council is scheduled for a reboot, as the three incumbents up for re-election this year will not seek additional terms.

Two of the three council incumbents—Mayor Michelle Sandoval and council member Ariel Speser—previously announced their intention to will step down. Pam Adams, the third incumbent told KPTZ this morning that she will step down at the end of her second term.

Adams was planning to retire before hearing that Speser would not seek a second term. Having three new city council members at a time would be difficult, considering the steep learning curve facing the newly elected. But she chose to step down due to a degree of burnout and a desire to explore other interests in the health education field.

As we reported yesterday, interim Fort Worden Public Development Authority Director Aislinn Dimanti will run for council, but has not decided which seat.

We can report that Hospital Commissioner Kees Kolff and Board of Education District 1 Members Connie Welch and at large member Jennifer James Wilson will run again. Wilson told KPTZ that she is running for a fourth term because she is proud of the board's work during her tenure and wants to be in place for new superintendent Linda Rosenbury, who begins in July.

Hospital Commissioner Mari Dressler did not return a call for comment about her plans.

District 1 Port Commissioner Bill Putney already announced he will not seek a second term. District 3 Commissioner Pete Hanke last told KPTZ that he would decide by April 15—that's today—but said that he will defer the decision until next week.

Here's the commentary part: I've covered Jefferson County elections for eleven years, and always seek to get a head start on who's running. Every time I end up annoying candidates several weeks before the filing deadline. My reason for this stems from a belief that an incumbent choosing to step down needs to do so in time for other people to put together a campaign, as this isn't an overnight decision. I would rather vote for a candidate who has given it some thought, rather than someone who files on Friday afternoon because a position is vacant or unchallenged. Case in point, Michelle Sandoval. Many council aspirants would not challenge her, but may come forward if she is not running. In many cases, the incumbent's presence in the race is the determining factor as to a decision to run.

The filing period in Jefferson County is May 17-21. At that time candidates can file online, by mail, or in person.

The Jefferson County auditor's office provides a downloadable guide for candidates that includes all relevant information, including how to file, where you can place candidate signs, and how to file reports with the Public Disclosure Commission. Go to the county website and click "Elections" to learn more.

The primary election will take place August 3, winnowing down all races to the two top candidates in preparation for the November 3 general election.

And even though the elections are nonpartisan, parties do get involved. I received two texts yesterday from the Washington State Democratic party, saying it is looking for people to run for local office in Port Townsend. For the record I'm undecided, but leaning against because I'd have to stay for the whole meeting.

Jefferson County reported one new case of COVID 19 yesterday, a woman in her 50s. Eight cases are now in isolation, with 68 people awaiting test results.

The pause in the administration of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine could contribute to vaccine hesitancy, something that concerned county health officer Dr. Tom Locke before Tuesday's announcement.

Jefferson Healthcare, which administers a majority of the county's vaccine, cancelling a Johnson and Johnson clinic scheduled for today. Another clinic for April 21, next Wednesday, is on hold and will be determined at a later date. Until then, those scheduled for that day can maintain their appointment until further notice. Those scheduled for either date can schedule for a Moderna clinic next Friday, April 23.

The advantage in staying put is that Johnson and Johnson only requires a single dose with no followup two weeks later like Moderna and Pfizer.

According to a hospital press release, Jefferson County leads the state in vaccine administration rates, with over 51% of residents receiving at least one dose and nearly 37% receiving full vaccination. Additionally, Jefferson County has the lowest prevalence of COVID disease in the state.

The hospital encourages everyone who has not been vaccinated to schedule an appointment as soon as possible. To do so go to [JeffersonHealthcare.org](https://www.jeffersonhealthcare.org) and click on the top yellow banner.

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

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.