

City of Port Townsend

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Mon, Feb 5: General Business Meeting
General Sewer Plan: First reading of new rate and utility tax ordinance

Mon, Feb 12: City Council Workshop Meeting
Public Safety: Annual Update

Tues, Feb 20: General Business Meeting
General Sewer Plan: Second reading of new rate and utility tax ordinance

Meetings are held at 6 p.m. unless otherwise noticed, and are subject to change. Visit cityofpt.us/calendar for updates.



Snowdrops near Haller Fountain, waking up in the midst of a cold winter.

GOOD THINGS TAKE HARD WORK

A letter from Mayor David Faber



A lesson I try to carry through my life is “if we want it, we have to build it.” With regard to our

local politics, I apply that lesson to mean that it is on us – sometimes the whole community, sometimes individuals or smaller groups – to fix our own problems, and to make the things we want or need.

Good things don’t happen without our hard work.

We have two great local examples over this last year: The Transportation Benefit District and the Port Townsend Golf Park. The Transportation Benefit District initiative was an example of collective community action.

After decades of underinvestment in our roads and sidewalks, nearly 80% of Port Townsend voters overwhelmingly approved the new .3% sales tax to pay for significant repairs and improvements that we should start seeing later this year. Meanwhile, the Golf Park took the concerted effort of a dedicated group of locals who realized if they wanted golf to survive in Port Townsend, they

needed to put in the time and money to make it viable.

Our community has other challenges that will take (serious) collective and individual action to resolve. For instance, our current pool is not going to last much longer. If we want to have a public pool – a place our children and grandchildren can safely learn to swim, where our elders can do aqua-therapy, and where everyone can recreate and exercise, then we have to be willing to actually pay for and build it.

Another example is affordable housing, which will take a combination of collective action

Continued on next page

POSITIVE CHANGE IS A TEAM SPORT

A message from City Manager John Mauro



With 2024 fully underway and the City's Strategic Workplan guiding the team, we're reminded that

the key to doing a lot with a little is collaboration and the key to staying innovative is keeping an open mind to new ideas.

Case in point: the Port Townsend Golf Park is quickly becoming a reality. Working closely with the Friends of the Golf Park we discovered common ground, found ways to move beyond past skirmishes, and are now looking towards the future of this central community gathering space together.

Positive change is a team sport and teamwork is the reason we arrived at this historic agreement, with dedicated volunteers, dedicated community members, dedicated City staff. We were eager to get right to it: to enliven our golf offering that's suffered from underinvestment for decades, to bring our entire community in to enjoy new trails and public space, to preserve our

remarkable native prairie, to add disc golf and foot golf and mini golf, to bolster food and beverage offerings and create an all-ages destination with special events and so much more.

We still need you to make this a true success. We welcome you to the space and to become engaged as an active participant. There's truly something for everyone. Join us and let's make this community space everyone's space.

And as we move through 2024, let's continue to allow this model of the Port Townsend Golf Park to usher in a new era, to serve as our reminder that

a positive, collaborative, innovative approach is the best way to get big things done. It's a fresh signal that we can work out differences, use our collective creativity, and work together in the best long-term interest of our community.

With our Comprehensive Plan process we have a lot of work ahead so let's keep honing our game on the course. See you out there! Learn more here: ptgolfpark.org and read the joint OpEd we wrote in the PT Leader, *Out of the Rough*, published Dec. 20, 2023.

John Mauro, City Manager

COFFEE CHAT
with City Manager
 John Mauro

Feb 2 & Mar 1 Bishop Block Bottle Shop
714 Washington St.
(Inside The Bishop Hotel)

9:00 to 10:30 a.m.
First Friday of Every Month

City of Port Townsend

Join John at the Bishop Bottle Shop in the historic Bishop Hotel for coffee, tea, and conversation. Coffee Chats are the first Friday of every month. Upcoming dates are February 2 and March 1. April-June, chats will be at Reveille Café in the Nora Porter Commons at Fort Worden State Park.

Mayor's letter, continued

and individual work/investment. We have to commit to building the housing we need, be it an ADU in our backyard, a house, or small apartment building on our spare lot, or Habitat, Olympic Housing Trust, or the City working on bigger housing projects. We won't solve our housing crisis unless we build the needed housing.

Thankfully, PT is full of hard-working and thoughtful people who, when called, rise to the occasion. It's one of the reasons my wife and I chose to come back home to Port Townsend after college, and one of the reasons I love being involved in our local politics. Back to work!

Mayor David Faber

WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!

Public comment for City Council and Advisory Boards can be submitted several ways, including online, bringing your comment to a public meeting, raising your hand while attending a public meeting virtually, or mailing your comment to City Hall. Need technical assistance to submit your comment? Don't hesitate to ask – City staff are happy to help.



Public Experience Liaisons Jess Winsheimer and Katie Kowalski joined the City of Port Townsend last year. City Hall hours are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays.

MEET THE PELS

Public Experience Liaisons (PELs) bring a smile to the center of the City's community engagement.

As the City's main point of contact, they serve a key role for all departments at the City, process all payments in the Finance Department, and field the community's questions and concerns.

We are currently hiring for a third PEL to join our team. This full-time position pays \$26.97-30.53 per hour base pay and has full Teamsters Union benefits. Learn more and apply at cityofpt.applicantpool.com.

CITY NOTICES

Sewer and Stormwater Rate Adjustments Coming Before Council in February

Did you know that the rates you pay with your utility bill sustain three independent business units of the City? The sewer, stormwater, and water utilities are all managed independently for financial sustainability, as utilities are core services provided by local government. Periodically, rates must be evaluated to ensure the utility is sustainable.

Our city sewer system is vital to public health and keeping our water clean. In the next five years,

the collection system, wastewater treatment plant, and compost facility are in need of \$20M in City investments in addition to approximately \$10M in grants. To help our community understand these investments we have released a video about what is needed to keep our system operational. Watch the eight-minute video on our YouTube channel. Curious for more details? You can take a deeper dive into the General Sewer Plan in the EngagePT section of our website.

Sewer and stormwater rates are currently under review and will not increase until April 1, based on Council decisions in February. We invite you to attend the **February 5** and **February 20** City Council Meetings where the new sewer rate and utility tax ordinances will be presented to Council and discussed.

The 2024 rates and utility tax will be announced in the March city newsletter, on your utility bill, and on our website.

Note that starting January 1, 2024, water rates increased by approximately 2% in accordance with Ordinance 3281 adopted in 2021. This is an annual rate increase. Detailed information about water rates can be found here: cityofpt.us/finance/page/utility-rates.



Watch our 2024 General Sewer Plan video, "Investing in Our City Sewer System" on YouTube.

FOLLOW US ON YOUTUBE

Watch all the videos about current City initiatives and how your City works by following our YouTube channel! Visit: youtube.com/@CityofPortTownsend and click "subscribe." While you're there, be sure to check out our 2024 General Sewer Plan video, "Investing in Our City Sewer System."

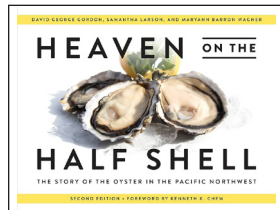
FEBRUARY LIBRARY PROGRAMS

**Fall in Love with Your Library:
Open House Event**
Wednesday, February 14, 4-6 p.m.

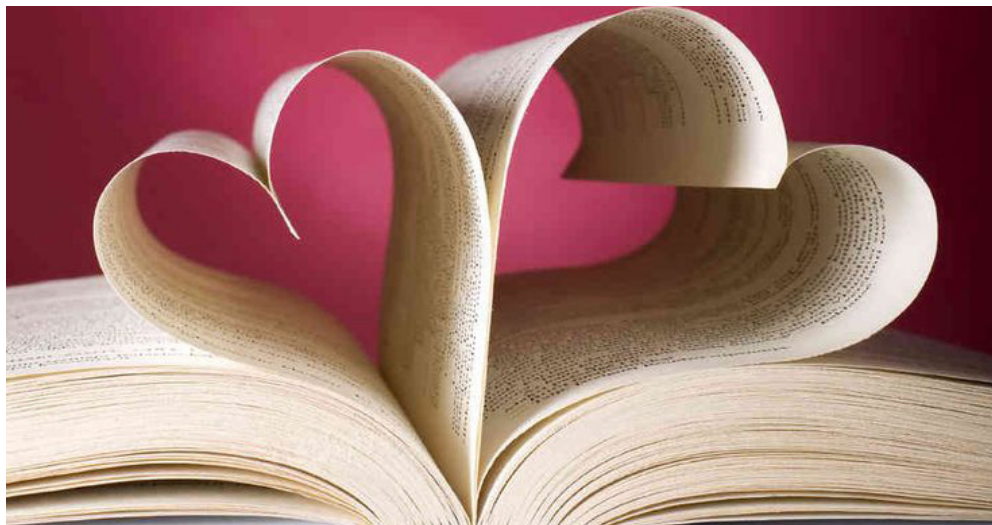
All are welcome at the library! Join us for an open house with live music, Valentine's Day crafts, and light refreshments. Sponsored by Friends of the Port Townsend Public Library.

**Heaven on the Half Shell:
Washington's Oyster Odyssey**
Thursday, February 22, 6 p.m.

Get to know the Pacific Northwest's most beloved bivalve, the oyster. In this talk, author David George Gordon discusses three types: Olympia, Eastern, and Pacific oysters — along with the people who have cultivated these delicacies for many generations.



This program is sponsored by the Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau.



**Trivia Night with PTHS Senior
Indigo Gould**
Monday, February 26th, 5-6:30 p.m.

Test your knowledge at an evening of pub-style team trivia! Questions will cover a range of topics, so there is sure to be something for everyone. Teams can be six people or less. Snacks are provided, and teams will have a chance at glory and a small prize. Sponsored by Friends of the Port Townsend Library. PTHS senior Indigo Gould and Youth and Outreach Library Manager, Emily Bufford, created this program as part of Indigo's senior project.

**Leap Day Poetry Reading with
City Poet Laureate,
Conner Bouchard-Roberts**
Thursday, February 29, 6 p.m.

Join City Poet Laureate Conner Bouchard-Roberts and friends for a Leap Day Poetry reading and conversation at The Port Townsend Public Library – 6 p.m. in the Carnegie Reading Room.

The Port Townsend Public Library is located at 1220 Lawrence St. Learn more at ptpubliclibrary.org.



The 2023 Holiday Extravaganza was made possible in part by both grant opportunities, City Lodging Tax, and City Arts Commission.

CALL FOR PTAC, LTAC GRANT APPLICATIONS

Two City Advisory Boards are inviting proposals for grant funding. The City Arts Commission (PTAC) and Lodging Tax Committee (LTAC) both manage grants to support local arts and culture events and to promote Port Townsend as a destination in the shoulder seasons. Funding for events and projects of all sizes are welcome and funding amounts depend on the number of applicants and eligible projects. Learn more about both grant programs on our website at cityofpt.us. The next PTAC deadline is **Tuesday, February 20** and the LTAC deadline is **Friday, February 23**.

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

The City of Port Townsend's Arts Commission (PTAC) reviews grant applications six times per year. These micro-grants provide essential funding for our arts community and all PTAC-funded events are open to the public with a pay-what-you-wish or free option. Learn more at cityofpt.us/bc/page/arts-commission-0