

# Despite economy, some getting big raises

By ELISHA MEYER

*Port Orchard Independent*  
Editor's note: Some government agencies did not fully respond to Public Records requests as required by state law—even after as much as five weeks. We note that here with hopes that public pressure will encourage them to provide the information.

While most people in the private sector are getting raises in the 3% range some in government are getting annual increases of up to \$23,000.

In Kitsap County, three leaders at Olympic College are receiving raises in the area of \$14,000 a year.

The schools superintendent in South Kitsap is getting a \$12,000 a



Tim Winter



Jeff Faucett



Matt Brown



Rob Putaansuu



Marty Cavalluzzi

year raise. The fire chief's raise also is \$12,000, while two deputy chiefs earned raises of \$10,000 each. Exact figures weren't provided, but the Port Orchard police chief received at least an \$11,500 raise and at the most over \$13,000. Two others received raises of over \$10,000 a year, and the mayor

about \$9,000. On Bainbridge Island two school administrators lead the way with hikes of \$23,000 and \$19,000, while the superintendent is getting an \$11,000 raise, as is the schools chief in Poulsbo. Two others in the North Kitsap School District are getting increases of

around \$10,000, as is the chief of the Poulsbo Fire Department. Compare those to Gov. Jay Inslee, whose annual raise is about \$8,000 to \$198,257, effective July 21. State Attorney General Bob Ferguson did much better than that, with an increase of \$11,500 to \$186,667. But the biggest increases in

state government are for Supreme Court. Chief Justice Steven C. Gonzalez is getting almost a \$18,000 raise to \$243,329 while fellow justices are getting more than \$15,500 raises to \$239,868.

## Port Orchard

Though the South Kitsap School District failed to provide the requested salary data, further research showed superintendent Tim Winter as the highest-paid member of the district at \$228,693. That amount reflected a nearly \$12,000 increase from the previous school year at \$216,771, which was also motivated by the state

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# Veterans receive valentines from local youth

By ELISHA MEYER

*Port Orchard Independent*  
Residents of the Washington Veterans Home in Port Orchard received loving messages of encouragement and thanks from students across Central and South Kitsap in honor of Valentine's Day.

U.S. Congressman Derek Kilmer served as the deliverer of the valentines, written by elementary students in Kitsap's public schools, including Port Orchard's Mullenix Ridge Elementary. Kilmer said his discussions with the youth of Kitsap unveiled a very real want to protect those who protect us.

"You'll be pleased to know how many of the young people said that we

need to take care of our veterans," he said. "We want to make sure you get the care that you have earned in service to our country."

The cards all had classic Valentine's Day symbols of hearts, red imagery and the like. They also contained personalized messages from students who thanked them for their service. A few explained how they had veterans in their family, creating a connection between the youth and the vets.

Smiles could be seen all around. The gesture even brought some tears. "They're awesome. Anything like this always brings me to tears," said Kris Boudreau, a disabled

Navy veteran who currently assists in fund-raisers and local awareness efforts for fellow disabled veterans.

Another resident unable to share her name was overjoyed to receive the valentines on behalf of her deceased husband. She said it helped her feel close to him during what can still be a hard time. "I wish he were here. He would love to see this."

Boudreau said he knows how much events like this mean to residents, bringing even the slightest smile to the hardest faces. "Seeing this from this generation who know very little of what we've done, from what they do know, it's heartfelt," he said.



A resident at Washington Veterans Home opens her valentine to read a special message. ELISHA MEYER/KITSAP NEWS GROUP

# Bremerton judge discusses staffing, tech challenges

By ELISHA MEYER

*Port Orchard Independent*  
In a display of transparency, Judge Tracy Flood of the Bremerton Municipal Court gave insight to its success and challenges in her State of the Court address Feb. 10.

The speech was the first of its kind for a judge in Bremerton courts, although Flood is no stranger to firsts, especially those marked by her election in November of 2021. Her successful run for the seat made her just the second elected judge of the city court and the first black woman to preside



ELISHA MEYER/KITSAP NEWS GROUP  
Bremerton Municipal Court Judge Tracy Flood addresses the crowd.

over a court in Kitsap County.

Upon taking the podium at the Norm Dicks Government Center in downtown Bremerton, she said creating and giving such an address was an important step in educating the public on the "independence of the judiciary."

"The State of the Court address is my opportunity to provide the community that elected me with how far we have come in the last

year," she said. "It is an opportunity to communicate my continued vision since my election, what I have accomplished the last twelve months and what we have accomplished."

Flood said the court looks forward to what is expected to be the first full post-COVID year of judicial business. She reported the court had moved past its mandatory mask requirements and was conducting "fully functional trials," but while the pandemic appears to be behind us, she also said it will be crucial to err on the side of caution and "stay ahead of the curve."

The municipal court, which also includes a therapeutic court to address mental health and drug cases, experienced a major caseload in 2022, with Flood reporting over 22,000 filings. Flood said she hopes to address the high number of cases by discussing increasing court staff, saying especially how

important it will be to keep the therapeutic court moving forward.

"People think about the therapeutic courts, and some say, 'Well, this is just another program to let people out of jail and to continue to give them a pass.' The therapeutic court program is about restorative justice, accountability and giving them the resources and tools to treat the whole person," she said.

One major update Flood said she plans to address is severely outdated technology in the courtroom. Some grant money will work to address the issues, including the AV media system that has not received any updates in 14 years and some computer systems nearing a decade in age. "We get the refurbished of the refurbished of the refurbished," she said, "and if you're running all this new technology on those systems, they crash."

Updating the technology is

especially important to Flood not just to adapt to modern standards, but also due to the several military workers who move around and may need access to the court to address matters virtually. She said she expects to give a better update in the coming year regarding technology. "We need the technology to be able to function at a level that the courts are now requiring to continue the access to justice, to allow for the remote hearings," she said.

Toward the end of her address, Flood thanked the city for continuing to work with her. She also promised citizens that while things may appear stalled, work is being done slowly but surely. "While we are the independent branch of the government, we still work with the city government, and things don't often move as fast as we would like, but they are moving."

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# Despite cleanup, neighbors feel unsafe as trash, homeless remain

BY ELISHA MEYER

Port Orchard city officials removed just over five tons of trash from a growing homeless encampment on Bethel Avenue Feb. 13.

To the naked eye, not much has changed as that same camp remains occupied with litter and at least two people as of Feb. 14 despite an official notice to vacate two weeks earlier. The camp has been active and growing in size since late November, most of it hidden by trees. It's largely recognizable by a big, blue tent just a few feet away from the road, and its extremely close proximity to The Mattress Store and Gravity Coffee, among other businesses.

Cassandra Martin, who works at Gravity Coffee, said the camp has created more concern for safety, emphasizing how unsettling it can be to leave work at night. "There's definitely a lot more homeless people walking up and down the street," she said. "We've also had issues with them coming up to our walk-up door on the other side there."

One man had caused trouble in the past, enough so that when police were called he was arrested. "We ignored him because we told him we aren't going to serve him anymore, and he was just banging on the glass, banging on the



A homeless person sits among the filth of the camp along Bethel Avenue.

windows, walking around and making us feel unsafe," Martin said.

Angela Garcia, who supervises the community development code enforcement officer, said city officials began working with the Kitsap Homeless Encampment Action and Response Team in early December to offer alternatives and help to the homeless. "When complaints of encampments are received, the first step is to contact available resources that can provide assistance to people," she said.

While a majority of the homeless reportedly took the help, a Notice to Vacate and Intent to Remove Property was served by the city Jan. 30

and acted upon Feb. 13. It was then that officials removed roughly 5.15 tons of "trash, human waste in assorted containers, cardboard and abandoned tents/tarps."

Two of the four tarps in the encampment were abandoned, warranting their removal. "These two abandoned tents/tarps were removed as they contained buckets/ bags of human waste and trash/debris. The other two tents were occupied upon arrival. Those two tents remain in place, and they were left undisturbed," Garcia said. A large barricade of concrete blocks surround the remaining tents and trash.



Piles of trash sit between various tarps and tents in the homeless encampment.

It was reported that one person was arrested for threatening city officials with an undisclosed weapon. That person's tent and items were left at the encampment.

One occupant who identified herself as Stephanie H. was thankful for not being completely displaced after she said she arrived there just the night before. "I just finished sixty days of treatment at Olalla for alcohol, and then I was supposed to go into an Oxford House, and I just started drinking again," she said.

Stephanie talked about how she ended up finding the encampment.

She said in her homelessness, it was less about caring where you slept at night and more about getting through one day at a time. "I think there are people who understand, and then there are people who are just really mean," she said.

Martin said she understands that the people in the camp are struggling, but she also understands the safety concerns with the camp still occupied. "I hope that they're able to figure things out, but I don't feel super safe with them right across the street," she said.

## CRIME BRIEFS

### \$1 million warrant

A \$1 million warrant has been issued for the arrest of Gary Michael Moyer for second-degree burglary, first-degree theft and motor vehicle theft.

The charges are the result of several crimes investigated by Kitsap County sheriff's detectives. Moyer is also wanted for questioning by multiple agencies in the region for various other crimes.

Moyer is already charged with the attempted theft of an ATM at a Chase Bank branch on SE Mile Hill Drive in South Kitsap County on Dec. 12, 2022, along with the Nov. 21, 2022, theft of an Amazon delivery van on Salmonberry Road in Port Orchard.

He was released after posting \$500,000 bail for those crimes.

Anyone with information on Moyer's whereabouts is asked to call 911 or submit a tip anonymously via www.CrimStoppers.com.

### Stolen cannabis

A 35-year-old Bremerton man was charged in Kitsap County Superior Court Feb. 13 for stealing cash and cannabis products from the Novel Tree.

He also was charged with taking a car without permission when a woman let him stay at her home during inclement weather in November. He faces five years and a \$10,000 fine on that charge.

He faces 10 years and \$20,000 in fines for robbery in the second degree. Bail was set at \$100,000.

Court papers say the man is suspected of robbing the Novel Tree July 4 and Dec. 29 of last year, along with Feb. 4 this year. Each time he hinted that he had a weapon, and a few times it was seen. He also said he was sorry, but he had a sick id.

The man also is a suspect in a sheriff's case of a robbery in Silverdale at the Fillabong. Camera footage confirms the identity of the man by his mannerisms and the clothes he wears.

While papers say he lives in Bremerton, he says he is homeless and lives in his car wherever he can park it from

Port Orchard to Poulsbo.

### Picture take

Note to self: When committing a crime, don't look straight into a surveillance camera.

A 37-year-old Port Orchard woman was in Kitsap County Superior Court after being arrested on a warrant, facing charges of first-degree burglary, theft of a firearm and robbery in the second degree.

Bail was set at \$100,000. If guilty on all charges, she faces life in prison and \$90,000 in fines.

Court records show on Jan. 11, the woman used bolt cutters to break a padlock and get into a residence. She

looked right at the camera. Ironically, the homeowner was in the backyard with deputies who were recovering a stolen vehicle.

That woman also is suspected of punching a homeless woman with a physical disability in the eye Nov. 20 of last year. The woman, who lives in the woods, was crying. The suspect accused the woman of stealing her clothes. The victim rode her bike, but then the suspect resisted up in a car, and pushed her over, hit her about five times and stole some of her possessions.

### \$100K bail

A 36-year-old man got into a fight with a police taser and

lost.

The man was in Kitsap County Superior Court Feb. 15 charged with third-degree assault and disarming a police officer. Both carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and/or \$10,000 in fines.

Bremerton police were called Feb. 14 at 6:52 a.m. when the man locked himself in a bathroom for hours and refused to leave. When police arrived, they told him he was under arrest. When he resisted, he was told he would be tased. But he broke free and started punching one of the officers. He was tased, but the fight continued, but it ended after he was tased again, court records show.

## Salaries

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legislature's increase in school district wages.

South Kitsap Fire and Rescue's top earner is chief Jeff Faucett at \$212,196.84. Faucett's increase also was just over the \$12,000 mark, with his 2022 salary amounting to \$199,152. Next up for SKFR are the two deputy chiefs, Josh Hurguy and Doug Richards, who each earn \$190,963. Their salaries increased by over \$10,000 from 2022-23.

When it comes to the top earners in the city of Port Orchard, documents contained the ranges of hourly pay for employees rather than actual amounts. Furthermore, the city had previously provided annual and monthly amounts in budgets since 2017-18, but not for more-recent documents. The ranges take into account minimum and maximum hourly rates, totaling 52 weeks of 40-hour work.

With that in mind, the highest-paid city employee is police chief Matt Brown, whose pay ranges from \$151,278 to \$175,406. Looking just at minimum pay, that is an \$11,419 increase from the 2021-22 biennial budget, which shows Brown's pay ranged from \$139,859 to \$162,177. At the high end, the raise would have been in the neighborhood of \$13,000.

Receiving similar raises were the city's community development director, Nicholas Bond, and finance director, Noah Crocker, who are in the same pay range of \$141,003 to \$163,508. The previous budget had them at \$130,353 to \$151,174.

The only annual salary to be listed on the 2023-24 budget is

Mayor Rob Putaansu, who will be paid \$119,145 annually. The mayor's salary in previous budgets has been listed as monthly or even hourly. In the last budget, his salary was listed as hourly and came out to \$110,156.

### Kitsap County

The highest-paid public official in Kitsap County is Marty Cavalluzzi, president of Olympic College in Bremerton. The next raises at the college won't be done until July. But he received a \$14,400 raise last year and is now making \$254,000.

College presidents make from \$180,000 to \$390,000 a year, says salary.com

Two college vice presidents received similar raises. Ronald Ellison in administrative services is now making \$156,340, up from \$142,000; and Martin Cockroft in instruction is making \$152,533, up from \$139,000.

Dr. Gib Morrow, health officer, is the highest-paid official with the Kitsap Public Health District. He makes \$202,512 a year. KPHD administrator Keith Grellner is next at \$164,820. Both receive 2.5% raises in 2023.

Statewide, Morrow's salary compares at \$184,460 to \$289,628, according to salary.com

Regarding county salaries, it did not provide all of the information required by law for Public Records Requests. It did not provide names or raises. Overall, county employees are making \$3 million more in 2023 compared with 2022. And 71.5% of the county budget goes to personnel—or \$59.4 million.

There is one person who makes \$196,635; three who make \$180,619; five who make \$169,942; one who makes \$164,603; four who make \$169,234; and one who makes

\$159,234.

"Names and compensation are not exempt from disclosure, and is posted by the state and many, many other local governments," Rowland Thompson of Allied Daily Newspapers, which provides legal advice, says in an email.

Rob Gelder, the Kitsap County commissioner who represents North Kitsap, made \$152,083 in 2022 and is set to make \$154,364 this year.

County commissioners adopted a compensation schedule for Commissioner Districts 1 and 2 for 2021-24 that established a salary in 2021 that is 7.5% more than that of the county assessor, auditor, clerk and treasurer's 2020 salary. That will increase 1.5% per year for 2022, 2023 and 2024. Commissioners can donate parts of their salary back to the county if they like.

To compare, county commissioners in Thurston County, which is just a little bigger than Kitsap, make \$146,685, which is 98% above the national average, statistics show.

### North Kitsap

In the North Kitsap School District, the top earner is superintendent Laurynn Evans, whose salary in 2022 was \$202,000. All NKSD staff received a 5.5% raise for 2023 as decided by the state legislature, which increased Evans' salary to \$213,000.

Jason Rhoads, executive director of finance, business and operations, made \$184,000 in 2022. This year, his salary was listed at \$194,120, but he resigned effective Feb. 3. Gwen Lyon, executive director of teaching and learning, along with Rachel Davenport, executive director of human resources and payroll, each made \$184,000 in 2022 and will make \$194,120 in 2023.

### Bainbridge Island

It's tough to tell who the highest-paid public official is since the Bainbridge Island Metro Parks and Recreation District did not respond to a Public Records Request.

For those who did respond,

retiring BI Fire Department chief Hank Teran was the highest paid at \$214,368 a year. In that same department, deputy fire chief Jared Moravec made \$188,644.

According to salary.com, fire chiefs in this state usually make from \$72,000 to \$160,000 a year.

Ranking second in BI is city manager Blair King, who made \$202,279 last year.

Compared to other city managers serving communities with about 25,000 people in 2021: Mercer Island, \$219,517; Oak Harbor, \$171,780; and Moses Lake, \$167,168, according to GovernmentSalaries.com.

The city did not provide what his next raise will be so he could be overtaken by school district superintendent Peter Bang Knudsen, who made \$199,207 in 2022, but will be paid \$210,163 in 2023. According to salary.com, high school superintendents make from \$150,222 to \$221,895 in the state.

Deputy superintendent Erin Murphy earns \$196,405, and Amil Thompson, executive director of Teaching and Learning for Elementary schools, made \$176,329. Thompson's 2023 raise is \$23,046 and Murphy's is 19,029.

Along with King, top-paid city employees include deputy city manager Ellen Schroer at \$153,437, Public Works director Chris Wierzbicki and Planning director Patricia Charnas, both at \$139,488, and police chief Joe Clark, who also made \$139,488.

Police chiefs in Washington state make from \$110,000 to \$140,000 a year, according to salary.com, which also says park directors in the state make up to \$83,763.

Editor Steve Powell and reporter Tyler Shuey and Nancy Tredy contributed to this report.

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