



## *Town of Friday Harbor*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Learning by Doing - Town Hosts Seventh Grade Mock Council Meeting**

The Town of Friday Harbor in collaboration with Friday Harbor Middle School created an experiential educational opportunity for seventh grade students to learn about local government through participating in a mock council meeting on November 26th. "It was really fun!" said student Jodie W. "Our whole class went to a Town Council meeting, but instead of just watching, we got to participate! I got to act as a councilmember, and I had fun learning about how the Town Council works!"

As part of the school's Northwest Studies class, seventh graders learn about government from a national to local level. "This mock council meeting was a unique and powerful way for students to engage directly with the democratic process," said Northwest Studies teacher Diane Heller. "By stepping into roles like councilmembers and citizens, students not only learned about how local government operates, but also discovered the importance of civic participation. Experiences like this bring the classroom to life and show students that their voices and ideas matter in shaping their communities." Students in Heller's class were presented with the opportunity to choose a topic that could potentially impact the town for a mock council public hearing and the opportunity to use Robert's Rules of Order. "I would say it was a nice opportunity to learn about local government," explained student Owen W. The students enacted the various government roles and represented public opinion by crafting presentations supporting and refuting the chosen topics. The mock council topics generated by the classes included the addition of bike lanes within town limits and improvement to Sunken Park that included the addition of parking spaces. "The students were engaged, and it was exciting to see their enthusiasm for learning how town government works," Town Administrator Denice Kulseth explained. "I think it's important that they know that their government is here to serve them, and while we might not be able to address every concern, we will do our best to address those that we can and explain the obstacles to addressing those we cannot."

During the experience students had an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about how to participate in government and present public concerns or comments. "I would say that it is inspiring to know that our opinions are valued," said student Russell R. Isla B. shared, "I would say that it was very professional in a good way. I learned a lot, and it was an exciting experience! I got to learn about the people in the Town Council roles and what they do. This trip has inspired

me, and I may even grow up and do something like this!" Overall, the experience had positive reviews from the students, teachers, Town staff, and councilmembers. "It is our hope to continue to provide these meaningful and authentic learning opportunities for the youth," said Town Clerk Jennifer Krembs. Students agreed. "I would want to do it again if I had a chance," said Isla D. "It was a great experience, and I learned a lot of interesting stuff about the Town Council such as ways to present ordinances to improve the Town," said Emma A.

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