

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT JUNE 5, 2020

City Manager

- **City Manager's Perspective George Floyd** – *Our (Police) department's organizational values; integrity, excellence, teamwork, fairness and impartiality, and respect are deeply entrenched within our agency at every level. We strongly believe in treating everyone as human beings. We value the sanctity of human life and we have incorporated de-escalation and the duty to intervene within our policies and training over the past few years. We will continue to hold ourselves accountable in the protection of the constitutional rights of everyone we serve and in treating everyone fairly. Chief Pam Davis*

We as local government leaders prioritize building trust with our community and creating an environment wherein **all** of our residents feel safe. As a city manager, we set the tone in our organization, establish the standards and values that are responsible to promote fairness, inclusion and openness. We try to do this with the best of our ability and available resources. However, this message comes as I am troubled by the events that have unfolded before us. As a nation we are trying desperately to find a vaccine for COVID-19 and have enlisted a significant amount of scientific and financial resources towards that goal. Yet over the past few months, we have witnessed the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor as well as a racially induced encounter between Christian Cooper (bird watching in Central Park) and Amy Cooper (no relation). These remind us once again of a problem that has plagued our nation for over 250 years. I am talking about systemic prejudice. And yet we don't seem to marshal the same amount of resources, passion and fervor that we have for combatting COVID. We do not condone the violence and looting that has occurred at some of the protests in our nation. We have witnessed businesses being destroyed in the neighborhoods that need them the most and injury to innocent bystanders. Once the protests eventually tone down, we will go back to our daily lives and talk about social distancing, wearing masks and wondering when a vaccine will become available for widespread use so we can once again enjoy concerts, shows, and sporting events at their full capacity. I fear the real issue I have pointed out will be pushed aside until it happens again. Just look at all of the mass shooting incidents (Sandy Hook, Columbine, Parkside, and Las Vegas, to name a few) and how as a nation we have responded to those tragic events. Communities coming together in prayer and remembering the victims but no widespread solutions in mitigating future occurrences. It is incumbent that our community continue to join together in a partnership that remains motivated on addressing and finding solutions to get rid of prejudice. We all possess our own biases – none of us are free from this trait, whether we admit it or not. We all have a responsibility to point out and deal with racism and other forms of bigotry when we see it. We all have a responsibility to promote and create equity and justness, whether one is in a leadership role or not. It may be difficult for some to engage in real, meaningful conversations about prejudice. It will not be easy – it's not supposed to be. Positive change will not come without conviction and passion. Being silent is not an option. *(Message inspired by thoughts from the International City/County Management Association and a high school administrator.)*

- **USA Today 10 Best** – The City of Punta Gorda has been nominated for the 2020 USA TODAY 10 Best Readers’ Choice Awards – Best Small Town Food Scene! [Voting is open to the public here](#), through June 29, at noon. Cast your vote daily and spread the word to help our beloved town win. Punta Gorda was the only Florida nominated town among 19 other nominees across the country.
- **Forbes Magazine Entrepreneurial Ecosystem** – The City of Punta Gorda has been named the 7th best entrepreneurial ecosystem in the nation. This designation is based on the share of employment by small firms, and the number of college-educated people working in those small firms. The high demand for goods and services also helped fuel this designation for Punta Gorda. Read the entire article at <https://bit.ly/3dqnvNa>.
- **COVID-19** – Governor DeSantis has extended the moratorium on evictions and foreclosures until July 1. Testing is available at Charlotte Sports Park by setting an appointment at <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/Pages/COVID-19-Information.aspx>. Current data regarding COVID-19 is available from the Florida Department of Health and can be viewed at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/96dd742462124fa0b38ddedb9b25e429>.
- **City Manager Interviews** – City Council determined their short list of candidates to interview for the City Manager position. Interviews will take place between June 22 and June 25. Candidates to be interviewed include David Condit, Michael Morrow, George Murray, Chris Eldridge, James Drumm and Caryn Gardner-Young.
- **City of Punta Gorda Town Hall Webinar Save the Date** – on June 19 at 10 a.m. residents of Punta Gorda are invited to ask questions of City Council, the City Manager and Department Leaders in this two hour question and answer session that will take place via Zoom. Questions can be submitted through Q and A during the webinar. A registration link will be provided in a future Weekly Update.

Upcoming Events

- **Fishermen’s Village Events** – can be accessed at <https://www.fishville.com/events/>
- **Military Heritage Museum Events** – can be accessed at <https://freedomisntfree.org/upcoming-events/>.

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
 - ❖ PGI (Magdalina Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - ❖ Colony Point (Colony Point Dr., W. Marion Ave., Socorro Dr., and Coronado Dr.)
 - ❖ PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross drive, Whippoorwill Blvd, and Turtle Dove Blvd).
 - ❖ PGI (Bal Harbor Blvd, Deborah Drive, Ryan Blvd, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).
 - ❖ Burnt Store Isles (Monaco Dr, Tripoli Blvd, Madrid Blvd, and Macedonia Dr).
 - ❖ Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Tr., N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree).

Urban Design

- City staff attended a Placemaking training workshop hosted by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District one. The workshop was hosted virtually and included many topics of roadway design that can support multiple travel modes enhance economic vitality and increase social equity. The workshop is part of the FDOT’s Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies, which are designed to reduce unnecessary roadway deaths and serious injuries.

- Kiwanis Shoes for Kids Project begins on June 21 and runs through July 26. This project provides new, properly fitted sneakers for children in the Charlotte County Public School System (CCPS). You can make a monetary donation thorough the Kiwanis webpage (www.pcsunrise.kiwanis.org) or donate a new pair of sneakers at one of our collection sites. Sites are located at www.shoesforkidsproject.org. Your gift means one youth will not have to wear duct tape, not have to curl their toes, not have to wear plastic bags over their socks. Helping just one child, changes their lives...THANK YOU!



Building Department

- **Building Inspection COVID-19 Process** – Beginning June 8, Punta Gorda will resume building inspections in occupied dwelling units with certain precautions. The safety of our citizens and employees is of the utmost importance to us. Therefore, anyone requesting an inspection inside an occupied residential dwelling unit (single- family home, apartment, condo, duplex) will be asked some questions to reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus.
 1. Within the last 14 days, has anyone in this household experienced a new cough, shortness of breath or a temperature over 100.4 that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
 2. Within the last 14 days, has anyone in this household had close contact with someone who is currently sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19? (Note: Close contact is defined as within six feet for more than 10 consecutive minutes).
 3. Within the last 14 days has anyone in this household traveled Internationally or traveled within the United States to areas of known for COVID-19 spread such as New York, New Jersey, Connecticut or Louisiana? (These states are specifically mentioned in Florida’s Emergency Declaration)

If the individual answers “NO” to these questions, then the inspector may enter the dwelling unit as long as social distancing of six feet is observed by the occupants and contractors on site. The inspector will be required to wear a protective mask inside the dwelling. If the individual answers “YES” to any of the questions, the building inspector will not be allowed into the dwelling unit. The inspection would then need to be rescheduled for a later date when the answers to the questions will be “NO”. If the inspector is unable to enter the dwelling unit, the contractor may utilize other options for the inspection: Inspection alternatives are available for A/C change outs, windows, doors, re-pipes and water heaters inside a dwelling unit. Contact John Smith, Plans Examiner, (941) 575-3380 for instructions. An inspection report from a Florida licensed engineer or architect will be accepted upon review. Inspections may be conducted within garages without the need of a questionnaire for electrical panels, water heaters, A/C change outs, doors and windows at the inspector’s discretion. The occupant shall open the overhead door and remain in the home while the inspection is being conducted. As an assurance to the occupants of the dwelling unit, any inspectors that can answer “Yes” to those same questions will not be conducting inspections.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has completed 16 seawall replacement projects in PGI and there are seven projects under construction. Four seawall replacement projects have been completed in BSI and there are two projects under construction. A seawall replacement project is not complete until sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 26 locations.
 - Crews performed four seawall cap and seam patches (58' linear ft.).

Engineering

- **City wide Drainage Swale regrading** – Progress was limited on the swale program due to rain. Berry St. between W. McKenzie St and W. Ann St. was excavated and prepared for sod.
- **FDOT - US 41 Carmalita Street to Marion Ave. within City of Punta Gorda** – FDOT's contractor, Highway Safety Devices, continues work to install new signals on US 41 from Carmalita St. to Marion Ave. The construction will take place Monday through Friday during daytime and nighttime/overnight hours, weather permitting. Lane closures may occur during daytime hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For complete details, contact information and map <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/engineering>.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry St.)** - The contractor base rock passed limerock barring ratio testing and is being placed in lifts, graded and rolled in. Pedestrians and cyclists are not permitted in the work area during construction. Anticipated completion by the end of Sept. 2020.



Right-of-way

- **Swale Cleaning & Sodding** - Crews cleaned and sodded the swale between Eagle Point and the water tower on Burnt Store Road.

Police Department

- **Statements on Community Relations and Protests** – Chief Davis made several statements this week regarding community relations and the upcoming protest, including a joint statement with the NAACP and the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office. Read these statements by visiting www.pgpdfnews.com.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Sept. 14 with oral board interviews scheduled on Sept. 15 and Sept. 16. You can apply to participate by visiting www.pgpdjobs.com. For more information, please contact the Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. Testing will be held on Jun. 15. To apply visit www.pgpdjobs.com. For more information, please contact the Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring Semester of 2021. Our internship program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal justice, and small government administration. Please contact the internship program coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

Fire Department

- The Fire Department conducted surface water rescue training utilizing the canal system in PGI. All department personnel have completed this training which utilizes a water rescue backboard which is used to remove a victim from the water. One of the unique capabilities of the Punta Gorda Fire department is that every fire truck in the City is equipped with surface water and dive rescue capabilities. All fire personnel are trained to various levels of dive rescue which will typically put trained divers on scene in about four minutes throughout the City.

Finance Department

- **Tax Revenue Update** – May tax revenue receipts (which typically lag one or two months) have shown the first signs of reduced revenues related to the Coronavirus pandemic. Below is a list of the percentage reductions or increases seen in May's tax distributions as compared to normal projections (excluding property taxes) and the affect overall year to date.
 - General Fund: Half Cent Sales Tax – 22% reduction, YTD down \$62,100 or 5.7%;
 - Communications Service Tax – 2% reduction, YTD down \$23,800 or 4.8% (this tax has been down most of the year due to bundling packages offered by providers)
 - Electric Utility Tax – 6% increase, YTD up \$1,300 or 0.1%;
 - Water Utility Tax – 5% increase, YTD up \$60,100 or 13.3%; State Revenue Sharing – 44% reduction, YTD down \$22,100 or 5.5%.
 - 1% Sales Tax Fund: 1% Local Option Sales Tax – 18% reduction, YTD down \$4,700 or 0.2%
 - Gas Tax Funds: Six Cent Gas Tax – 11% reduction, YTD \$12,700 or 3.6%;
 - Additional Five Cent Gas Tax – 7% reduction, YTD down \$4,000 or 2.5%

The City continues to monitor the situation and reviews local and state data as well as economic forecasts which currently vary widely regarding how quickly the economy will recover over the next three to 18 months.

Utilities Department

Utilities Administration

- The resampling for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) continues at the sample site located at 601 Shreve Street. A table of the resample values is on the City's web-page under the Utilities Department. All resample values are below the 80 ug/L drinking water standard.

Groundwater R.O. Construction Update

- The project is nearing completion. The actual startup of the new RO facility will be a measured and gradual process. We are testing to ensure all the components including pumping, controllers, sensors and chemical feed systems are functioning as designed to ensure the water produced meets all regulatory standards. We expect the new RO facility to begin providing water to the City's customers by the end of June.

- Week 100 – As work continues inside the RO plant received its name.



Wastewater Treatment Plant Deep Injection Well Mechanical Integrity Test (MIT)

- WWTP staff and the City well Contactor Layne Christensen performed testing to the effluent disposal well. The testing is required after every five years of operation by the Department of Environmental Protection to insure reliable and safe operation of the effluent disposal system. Contractor performed a video inspection of the inside of the well casing at a depth of 2,800 ft.; and installed a packer in the well casing for required pressure test of the casing to verify the well is able to provide reliable service for the next five years of operation. Well testing was completed June 1. A satisfactory pressure test of the effluent disposal well was achieved with a two psi static pressure loss (0.94%) recorded over the 60 minute test, with a starting pressure of 212 psi. which is within the five percent variance limits of the test. FDEP official was present for the pressure test. Radioactive Tracer Survey (RTS) was also completed. Results of the RTS indicates that the cement sheath behind the steel injection casing is intact and should prevent upward fluid migration.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 30.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 4.4 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving water at a rate of .5 million gallons per day, started Sept. 30.
- Rainfall in May 2019 6.20”, May 2020 02.26” June 2019 7.30”, June 2020 2.20”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “very hard” – Grains of Hardness 20 ppm – Total hardness 342 ppm
- TDS for June 4 – Current 514 ppm, Low 394 ppm, High 605 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 513 ppm
- Reservoir June 4 – Current 5.32’, Record Low 4.42’, Record High 6.30, 55 Year Avg. 5.23’

City Clerk

- The next General Election for the City of Punta Gorda will take place on Nov. 3 and will include City Council Districts 1, 2 and 4 (to be included on the County's ballot). Councilmembers serve a two (2) year term. Candidate packets are now available through the City Clerk's Office by calling 575-3305. Candidate information and forms are also available online on the City's website at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/city-clerk/elections-and-voting> as well as from the Department of State Division of Elections website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections>. Filed candidates for City district seats must obtain a minimum of 25 but not more than 50 signatures from registered voters in their district to qualify to put their name on the ballot. Qualifying begins this coming Monday, June 8, (at noon) and ends at noon on Friday, June 12. Petition forms must be obtained from the City Clerk. For information or questions regarding qualifying, please contact Karen Smith, City Clerk, at (941) 575-3305 or email pgclerk@cityofpuntagordafl.com. Questions regarding voter registration, vote-by-mail ballots or precinct and polling information should be directed to the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Office at (941) 833-5400.
- **Current Board and Committee Vacancies ([Volunteer Appointment Information Form](#))**
Several City Boards will resume holding meetings beginning in June (only those with time sensitive or urgent business to address). Please check the City's web calendar for schedule. The City Clerk's Office will continue to announce vacancies and accept new Board Appointment Information Forms (available at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/boards-committees>) from interested citizens for City Council consideration so that we are prepared to resume meetings with a full quorum of members when it is safe to do so.
- Building Board – (Two alternate vacancies) Meets the 4th Tuesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers – City residency not required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Four members must be involved with the building industry and three members must be consumer advocates who are not, nor ever have been, involved with building industry. Makes recommendations to City Council on the minimum qualifying requirements for obtaining Certificates of Competency in the various construction trades and the fees for same. Periodically reviews and holds public hearings on all building, electrical, plumbing, housing, gas, fire prevention and other related codes. Reviews enforcement of all codes relating to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.

New Businesses

- All persons, firms or corporations engaging in business or occupation within the City of Punta Gorda are required to obtain a Local Business Tax (LBT) Receipt in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Punta Gorda City Code. As part of our effort to promote economic development and vitality in our area, we offer the following list of new or transferred business within our community this week:
 - ✓ Mist Development, LLC, 950 west Olympia Avenue
 - ✓ Tara Majorino, Stylist, Purple House, 312 Sullivan Street