



Florida's Harborside Hometown

Weekly Highlights Report February 26, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – In previous columns I have discussed the responsibility that local government has to public health. Much of the information previously shared was in regard to prevention of disease transmission and disaster preparedness. The city's responsibility for public health is large in scope. It also includes the provision of water and wastewater services to both city residents and those living in unincorporated Charlotte County in our utility service area.



The City of Punta Gorda operates two water treatment plants. A surface water plant gets its source water from Shell Creek, and the newest plant which is a reverse osmosis plant uses ground water drawn from wells. Both plants are operated and monitored via computer interface systems. Plant operators are able to access the system remotely for emergency operations if necessary. There are safe guards in place to restrict access to only authorized personnel, but of course it is still a computer system. The plants themselves have meters throughout the treatment process which monitors the chemistry of the water. When meters have a reading outside their set parameter, it will send an alarm to the system to alert the operators on duty. In addition, the operators take samples and analyze the chemistry manually. This is an additional safety check and also verifies that the meters are reading correctly.

The situation in Oldsmar, Florida brought the safety of these facilities into the spotlight. In the Oldsmar attack an operator's computer was overtaken by a remote hacker. The hacker raised the levels of sodium hydroxide to 100 times the normal level. Sodium hydroxide is a chemical that basically changes the pH of the water. It can be contained in drain cleaner as was reported, but can also be contained in common household products such as shampoo and even shaving cream (or water). Although it was later reported that this incident was actually at a wastewater treatment facility, the City of Punta Gorda water treatment facility has pH monitors that automatically alarm if the pH is out of range, and also manual sampling protocols. The same is true for other chemicals.

While cybersecurity is certainly not a new issue with security concerns spanning many years, city staff remains equally as concerned with physical security to protect the water supply and treatment facilities. Simply limiting access to the facilities is one form of physical security in place for the City of Punta Gorda's water and wastewater utility and one of the primary forms of protection. This includes fencing as another feature designed to protect the vital assets and protect the water supply.

Physical and cybersecurity do not happen without the people committed to providing quality service to our utility customers. Six divisions; utilities administration, water treatment, water distribution, wastewater treatment, wastewater collections and fleet, made up of 68 individuals work under the direction of Interim Utilities Director Chuck Pavlos to ensure safe drinking water and safe treatment of wastewater for the city utility customers. The provision of these services is a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year responsibility and I thank each of our employees who take on this challenge. Their work helps the city deliver on our vision to continue to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development and sustainability.

- City Council Meeting – The Punta Gorda City Council will meet on Mar. 3 at 9 a.m. at the Historic City Hall. Some of the agenda items include:
 - Award of Security Enhancements to Charles Perry Partners, Inc.
 - Appropriation for Wayfinding Signage Project
 - Sign Code Draft Discussion
 - Street Closure Policy

The complete agenda will be available at [http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/city-clerk/agendas-minutesAgendas & Meetings | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/city-clerk/agendas-minutesAgendas & Meetings | City of Punta Gorda, FL (punta-gorda.fl.us)). The meeting will be streamed at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw

- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”** – The City of Punta Gorda has launched a new program entitled Promote Punta Gorda. This is a small business spotlight to focus on the businesses that are at the heart of Florida’s Harborside Hometown. Small business is a critical economic driver for the city. Not only do small businesses create jobs, they also foster community pride and create a unique sense of place. It is only with the partnership with business that the city can fulfill our mission to preserve and enhance Punta Gorda’s identity as a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history; and as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. Promote Punta Gorda shines the light on the many business owners and their offerings in the community. Small business owners within the City limits of Punta Gorda are eligible to have their business featured on the City’s social media channels and in the Weekly Highlights Report. To sign up to be in the spotlight visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/promote-punta-gorda-business-spotlight> or call (941) 575-3394 for more information.



Upcoming Events

- Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/events>
- Fishermen’s Village events can be accessed at <https://www.fishville.com/events/>
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events/calendar>
- Military Heritage Museum events can be accessed at <https://freedomisntfree.org/#>
- Feb. 27, Boys and Girls Club Farm to Table Fundraiser, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information visit, <https://www.bgcofcc.org/events>

- Feb. 28, Charlotte County Veg Fest, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information visit, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/charlotte-county-veg-fest-2021-2nd-annual-tickets-97988661725>
- Mar. 6 and 7, MY Promotions Arts & Craft Show, 10175 Tamiami Tr. (Muscle Car City). For more information visit, <http://www.mypromotions.com/>
- Mar. 6, YMCA Harbor Nights Fundraiser, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information visit <https://www.swflymca.org/events/2021/03/06/port-charlotte/harbor-nights-2021/>
- March 6, Bacon Jam, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information, visit <https://bscevent.com/bacon-jam-punta-gorda/>
- Mar. 14, Concert in the Park, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information, contact Allmyheartllc2018@gmail.com.
- Mar. 1-15, TEAM Punt Gorda's Build a Bike-Win a Bike (Pedal and Play alternative). For additional information visit <https://teampuntagorda.org/pedal-and-play-in-paradise-2/>
- Mar. 17, St. Patrick's Day Event, Celtic Ray, 145 E Marion Ave. For additional information visit <https://celticray.net/>
- Mar. 19-20, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For more information contact jim.finch@charlottecountyfl.gov

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – Land Development Regulations (LDR's): Save the Date!** The Code Framework Workshops will be held in Mar. More information regarding the workshops are provided below with dates, times, and their own Zoom link. For more information, please contact UrbanDesign@CityofPuntaGordaFL.com.

Code Framework Workshop: Part I Mar. 23 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

The Code Framework Workshops have been designed to involve the community of Punta Gorda in establishing the building blocks of the new form-based code. In the first part of this two-meeting workshop, Dover, Kohl and Partners will give a brief overview of what land development regulations and form-based codes are and then go into more detail regarding the challenges and issues with Punta Gorda's existing zoning regulations. A question and answer session will follow. After questions have been answered, the planning team will present some initial elements for the future Form Based Codes framework for the community to consider. Participants will be asked what building types they prefer and where they think those are appropriate as well where the most and least intense building forms should be permitted.

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XOKKJbA3QYKwcv_jXOOZnQ

Code Framework Workshop: Part II Mar. 30 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

The Code Framework Workshops have been designed to involve the community of Punta Gorda in establishing the building blocks of the new form-based code (FBC). In the second part of this two-meeting workshop, Dover, Kohl and Partners will summarize the community input from Part I, as well as input received during the technical meetings. The team will then present an updated Regulating Plan, which is a fine-grained version of a zoning map that divides the FBC area into distinct zones that correspond to unique building form standards. Participants will be asked if they agree or not with the zones defined in the plan and will have a chance to recommend revisions. To get into more detail about the character of development that is appropriate for each zone, participants will also be asked about specific architectural styles, building form standards, and frontage types.

Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dmYKLO0bSoKL3cETXbndyw



Code

- **Permits required** – Staff would like to remind our residents and contractors that a Right-of-Way (ROW) permit is required prior to restoring or re-sodding any right-of-way, for all properties, developed or vacant. ROW permit applications must be submitted by a licensed contractor. The ROW permit will initiate a line and grade inspection to ensure that proper drainage is maintained as the property is restored.
- **Signs in the Right-of-way (ROW)** – At the Feb. 17 City Council meeting, Council motioned that beginning Feb. 26, Code Compliance will resume the enforcement and removal of all signs placed in a public ROW, in all zoning districts, regardless of content, with the exception of approved special event signage.

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
 - Colony Point (Colony Point Drive, West Marion Avenue, Socorro and Coronado Drive).
 - PGI (Bal Harbor and Ryan Boulevard, Deborah Drive, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).
 - PGI (Magdalena Drive., Via Vento, West Henry Street, Appian and Columbian Drive).
 - PGI (Almar Drive, Albatross Drive, Whippoorwill and Turtle Dove Boulevard).

Public Works

Engineering

- **Palm Avenue between Chasteen Street to McGregor Street Road Closure** – Utilities staff is awaiting approval from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for bacterial testing so that the final water main connections can be completed.
- **Adrienne Street Pier** – Pending is the delivery of materials. The materials are back ordered due to the storm and power outages in Texas. The pier is currently closed to the Public and will remain so until the work is complete.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work is underway along Santander Court and Segovia Drive. Work will begin on Portofino Drive the first week of March.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – The project is complete.
- **Veterans' Park** – Public Works and Urban Design staff assisted volunteers with the installation of the Purple Heart Monument at Veterans' Park and cleaning of memorial bricks.



Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Assessment** – The field work for the Annual Seawall Assessment is complete.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has seven projects under construction and six projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There is one seawall replacement projects currently under construction and three projects completed in Burnt Store Isles. Four seawall replacement projects are scheduled for Burnt Store Isles this fiscal year. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 22 locations.
 - Crews patched/repaired 49' linear feet of seawall cap and seams.
 - Crews removed one (16 ft.) piling from the canal.

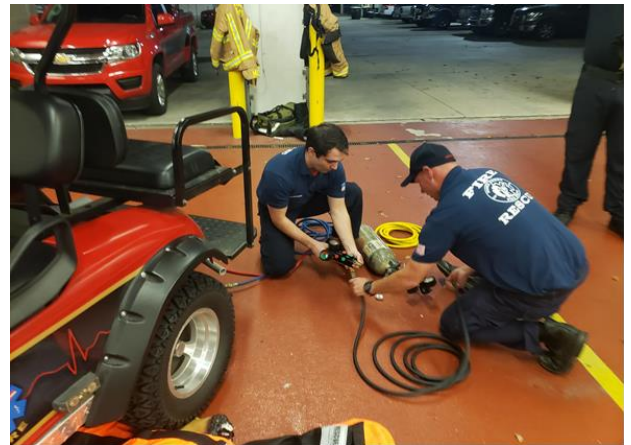
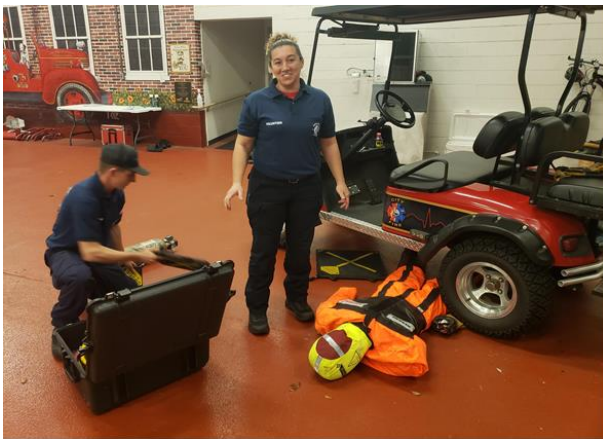


Police

- **Watch Out for Gift Card Scams** – Please remember that legitimate businesses, organizations, and government entities will **NEVER** ask you to make a payment using gift cards. If anyone calls you and requests that you make a payment by purchasing gift cards and providing the numbers, please hang up the phone! Gift cards are nearly impossible to trace and the chances of identifying the scammer and returning the money spent on them is very low. If someone asks you to purchase gift cards to pay a past due bill, provide money for a loved one in trouble, to pay back taxes, or for any other reason, please call (941) 639-4111 and ask to speak with an officer before making any purchases.
- 
- **K9 Donation** – Thank you to the residents of the Gulf View RV Resort who presented the police department with a donation for the K9 Unit. We appreciate the continued support of our program and love our community!
 - **Police Officer Testing** – The police department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Apr. 19 with oral board interviews scheduled on Apr. 20 and Apr. 21. Currently we are only accepting applications from candidates who are currently certified, Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible, current law enforcement academy students, or those with prior experience in a law enforcement related field. To learn more visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/human-resources/employment-opportunities>.
 - **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 Apr. 26.
 - **Internship Program** – police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer & Fall Semesters 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. Spots fill up quickly so we encourage potential interns to apply today! To apply for any of these positions or for more information please visit www.pgjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for more information.
 - **Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program:** The police department has an active and diverse volunteer program including vehicle patrol, bike patrol, marine patrol, community services, and more. We are always looking for dedication volunteers. Members of the community interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing vip@pgorda.us. To apply for employment or for more information, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.
- 

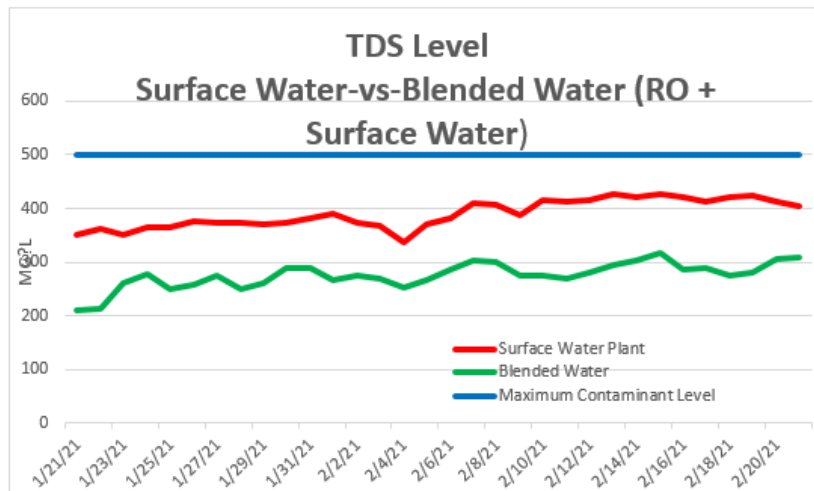
Fire Department

- Volunteers** – The Punta Gorda Fire Department has a volunteer section. The Punta Gorda Fire department volunteers meet every second and fourth Monday evening. They usually have up to 25 active volunteers who are either interested or already certified in becoming a state certified Firefighter/EMT. After their meeting they train on the skills and abilities of being a Firefighter/EMT. They also contribute a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer time riding with the paid members of the department. This week they covered using airbags in emergencies. The departments Field Training Officers have contributed to teaching the skills that are used in the field for the active members of the department.



Utilities

- Ground Water RO Update** – Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) allowable is 500



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 51.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.4 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 950 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 750 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Feb. 2020 0.90” Feb. 2021 1.20”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 8 ppm – Total hardness 132 ppm
- TDS for Feb. 25 – Current 260 ppm, Low 260 ppm, High 661 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 493 ppm
- Reservoir Feb. 25 – Current 5.11’, Record Low 4.93’, Record High 5.93’, 55 Year Avg. 5.22’

City Clerk

Current Board and Committee Vacancies ([Volunteer Appointment Information Form](#))

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (Two alternates) meets the fourth Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms, maximum of three terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- **Building Board** – (One alternate) meets the fourth 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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – Meets the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board. Three-year terms, maximum of two terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to, but not limited to, revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies and review of utility specifications.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (One regular and two alternates) Meets the fourth Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Two members must reside within the Historic District. Three year terms, maximum of three terms. Identifies for the City Council historically significant structures and sites that should be considered for designation as a “Local Historic Landmark” or be nominated for listing on the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Makes recommendations of the policies for the protection of historically significant structures and sites. Makes recommendations to staff with regard to certificates of appropriateness for any demolition, variance, sign or relocation of structures. Promotes public awareness of historic preservation.
- **General Employees’ Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents, two general employees and one at-large as appointed by the Board. Four year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees’ Pension Fund.

- **Firefighters' Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents, two firefighters and one at-large as appointed by the Board. Two year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the Firefighters' Pension Fund.

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:
 - Acuity Urgent Care LLC, 310-312 Nesbit Street
 - Edward D Jones & Co, 100 Sullivan Street, Unit 111