

Weekly Highlights Report April 23, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – I have spent much of the first 6 months in the city getting to know and evaluating the organization as a whole. I discovered that we have a very dedicated group of 294 employees that are performing to peak capacity, many times just to be able to maintain the infrastructure and services we currently provide. The city is at a point where we need to be able to move forward as a whole, and to do so our departments can use additional support to present the long range targets that can be incorporated into fiscal and operational planning.



We are in a position where we are turning the corner from recovering, rebuilding, and maintaining our infrastructure and services, to evaluating, improving, and expanding needed services and initiatives. These include additional projects, the staffing necessary to maintain new and expanding city infrastructure, annexation initiatives, economic development, support for businesses, and the strategic planning that incorporates the resulting impacts into our long range planning efforts. This then allows us to continue to improve city services while providing the support needed in each department according to an efficient, effective plan. The first area to help support these initiatives is to focus on the planning aspect necessary to effectively prepare and present them through the upcoming budget process. All of the issues mentioned not only impact revenue and expenses to the city, but also the needs of departments that allow us to transition to the new mode of operation that will be needed.

In the City Manager's office, I am pleased to announce the reclassification and promotion of Melissa Reichert to Assistant City Manager. This will allow us as a city to better focus on long term strategic planning, and to assist with identifying and planning for areas that need additional attention as well. Melissa will continue to coordinate the public relations and community affairs function for the City Manager's office, as well as support economic development, and other initiatives that support departmental and City goals. Additionally, we are in the process of replacing the Executive Assistant in the City Manager's office and a Legal and Administrative Assistant to help manage the workload to support the City Attorney, for contract reviews to help move planned projects forward, for annexations, and specialized support.

We are unfortunately saying good bye to longtime Assistant to the City Manager and Paralegal, Macalle Finkle. Macalle is relocating after taking a vacation exploring the U.S. Her knowledge has been critical in supporting the City Manager and City Council.

I am also happy to formalize the position of Utilities Director. Chuck Pavlos has filled the role of Interim Director for the last year and has agreed to stay on as the permanent Utilities Director. With projects such as a \$34 Million wastewater treatment plant upgrade, additional water plant improvements on the old facility, economic development with service area impacts, and infrastructure improvements, we are pleased to have Chuck as a key member of our team.

As we move forward, we will continue to build on the well-crafted platform we are fortunate to have in order to enhance operations and help move the City of Punta Gorda forward together

- **Facial Covering Ordinance** – The Facial Covering Ordinance in the City of Punta Gorda will expire Apr. 30. Business owners and managers can still require customers to wear facial coverings in their business if they would like and request anyone failing to comply with their request to be trespassed. City facilities will still have the following requirements in place: Entrance to any City facility shall only be through the designated entrance.
 - A. All customers who seek assistance directly from City staff members are strongly encouraged to wear a mask, and use hand sanitizer or soap and water immediately prior to meeting with City staff.
 - 1. All customers who wish to meet face-to-face with staff shall be required to respond to questions posed by the attendant in the lobby of potential exposure to CoVid-19; and, they shall be required to agree to a temperature scan. If their temperature is 100.4 (F) or higher, they shall not be allowed access to City buildings until they have gone 48 hours without a fever without the use of any medications, and all symptoms have improved.
 - B. Customers are encouraged to conduct their business with the City as follows:
 - 1. Electronically, including email, online service portals, telephonically, or Zoom; a kiosk is also available in the City Hall Annex building for water accounts.
 - 2. Unless it is absolutely imperative that a customer meet face-to-face with a member of City staff, customers should avail themselves of self-service options such as permit application and payment drop boxes. Permits will be available for pickup with a minimum of interaction.
 - C. BUILDING LOBBIES, INCLUDING THE ELEVATOR LOBBY IN THE CITY HALL ANNEX IS NOT TO BE USED FOR CONDUCTING FACE-TO-FACE BUSINESS.
- **City Council** – City Council met at 9 a.m. on Apr. 21 at the Historic City Hall. The meeting is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw .
 - Councilmember John Miller announced that he will not be seeking a second term for the District three seat due to an ongoing battle with cancer.
- **Candidate Packets Now Available** – Candidate packets for the 2021 City General Election are now available through the City Clerk’s Office, City Hall, 326 West Marion Avenue. The 2021 General Election will take place on Nov. 2 and will include City Council District 3 and 5. Councilmembers serve a two (2) year term and are elected at-large. Only opposed candidate races will appear on the ballot. If more than two candidates seek election for any one district seat, a primary election must be held on Aug. 17 (11 weeks prior to the General Election). Qualifying for the 2021 General Election cycle begins, Jun. 7 at noon and ends on Jun. 11 at noon. For information or questions regarding qualifying, please contact Karen Smith, City Clerk, at (941) 575-3369 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. Candidate forms can also be obtained online from the City’s website at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us> as well as from the Division of Elections website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections>.
- **Comcast Update** – Comcast reports that this week, they completed cleaning up the messy wires on the remaining 81 poles that were on their list, and those were completed on Monday. In addition, they relocated wires on 31 additional poles in Burnt Store Isles on Porto Fino, Maltese, Macedonia, Bastia and Tripoli. Those poles are now vacated and will be able to be removed by Florida Power and Light.

- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight” The Foot and Ankle Centers of Charlotte County – Products and Services offered:**

The Foot and Ankle Centers of Charlotte County, has been providing excellent podiatry care since 1976. Dedicated to providing a full spectrum of foot, ankle and lower leg care. We offer a wide range of treatments from diabetic foot care, wound care, ingrown toenails, fractures of the foot and ankle, bunions, hammertoes, heel pain, custom and over the counter orthotics, in office non-invasive vascular testing and a great selection of diabetic shoes.



What makes your business special?

Our podiatrists and staff provide the highest quality foot and ankle care treatment available in Charlotte County, Florida. We have podiatry offices in Punta Gorda and Port Charlotte where we treat patients of all ages and accept most insurance plans. If you are experiencing foot pain contact us today. Our six foot and ankle physicians can help treat your lower extremity problems both surgically and conservatively.



How does your business help the community?

We love to see our patients living healthy and active lifestyles. Promoting health and fellowship is a core principles for us. Because of this, we are sponsors of the Zoomers Southwest Florida Running an Triathlon club. We are also sponsors for the Charlotte County Marlins youth baseball team. (Go Marlins!) We also believe that medical care should be afforded to those in need regardless of income. This forged the partnership with the Virginia B Andes medical clinic to see patients for free in our office.

What facts are important for customers to know about your business?

- Since our practice was started in 1976 by Dr. Matthew Fineman, we have been the leading provider for foot and ankle care in Charlotte County, FL.
- Over 80 years of clinical knowledge between our six physicians!

Any fun facts you would like to share about your business?

- Our original office location in Punta Gorda was converted into an Escape room
- Original office used to be a butcher shop.

Upcoming Events

- Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at <https://visualartcenter.org/pages/calendar-of-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/#>
- 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/>
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve St., PGICA's Education Program classes can be accessed at https://pgica.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=799073&module_id=364888
- April 30, Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, contact teresadesguin@iheartmedia.com

- May 1, Mental Health Awareness Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact kpomerville@cbhcfl.org
- May 9, YMCA Healthy Kids Day 5K Run, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact lnason@skyyymca.org
- May 22, Girls on the Run 5K Run, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact kim.amontree@girlsontherun.org
- May 27, Healing Field of Honor, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information contact adairrobin@gmail.com
- May 31, Memorial Day Veterans Race, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information www.memorialdayrace.org
- May 31, Memorial Day Car Show, Fisherman's Village, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade. For more information contact mkting@fishville.com

Lot Mowing Program

- The city has begun mowing the following areas:
 - Colony Point (West Marion Avenue, Socorro, Colony Point and Coronado Drives).
 - PGI (Bal Harbor Boulevard, Deborah and Casey Key Drive, Ryan Boulevard, Suzi Street).

Urban Design

- **Planning Corner - It's National Playground Safety Week!**

National Playground Safety Week, observed Apr. 26 – Apr. 30, is a time to build awareness around playground safety. Have you visited one of Punta Gorda's beautiful playgrounds? Located at 400 West Retta Esplanade in historic Punta Gorda, the Gilchrist Park Playground is adjacent to Charlotte Harbor and sits underneath the iconic Ficus Tree. The Playground includes a Pirate ship where you can "walk the plank" and steer the ship! Other playground features include a swings, climbing areas, slides, and other features for an unlimited amount of fun.



- ✓ The playground is geared towards children ages five to 12 years old. Adult supervision is recommended at all times.
- ✓ The Playground in part was made possible through the generosity and support of the Friends of Gilchrist Park Playground.

The following are Gilchrist Park's Playground Rules, which must be obeyed in order to prevent injury to yourself and others:

- ✓ It is a non-smoking facility
- ✓ It is a City of Punta Gorda park and is regulated by the City Code of Ordinances
- ✓ Visitors assume all risk and responsibility for use of the playground equipment
- ✓ Adult supervision is recommended at all times
- ✓ Be safe by avoiding running, pushing, or shoving
- ✓ Wear proper footwear – fully enclosed, rubber soled shoes are recommended
- ✓ Grills and glass containers are prohibited
- ✓ Only service animals are allowed on the playground
- ✓ Please do not use the equipment during inclement weather
- ✓ This playground has been made accessible to all persons with varying disabilities
- ✓ Use each play structure as it is intended – improper use may result in injury



For more information, please contact UrbanDesign@CityofPuntaGordaFL.com

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Channel Marker Inspections** – The Peace River Sail and Power Squadron has volunteered to inspect City maintained channel markers. They will locate and verify the Global Positioning System coordinates (latitude and longitude) of each channel marker and compare the data with the United States Coast Guard Light List - any discrepancies will be reported for correction. Each sign will be inspected, inventoried and photographed. The work will be performed on Apr. 26 from 9 a.m. to approximately 12 p.m. Boaters are asked to use caution around the channel markers during the inspection period. If you have questions or concerns please contact Canal Maintenance Supervisor, Catherine Miller, Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has six projects under construction and 13 projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. All seawall replacement projects in Burnt Store Isles have been completed. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.



- Crews filled depressions at 23 locations.
- Crews removed one (eight foot) piling from the canal.
- Crews completed two sonar reading surveys at Albatross/Oriole and Casey Key Drives.

Engineering

- **Adrienne Street Pier** – The pier has been lifted, and final pile jacket installation is in progress. The pier will be closed to the public while work is being performed.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Installation of a catch basin at 3507 Terin Court is underway. Upon completion of this work and the grading and sodding of approximately 100 square feet all drainage improvements on Terin Court will be finalized. Work is underway at 685-699 Macedonia Drive however; the rainy weather this week has prevented any work from being done Apr. 19 through Apr. 21.
- **King Street Survey and Plan** – The survey work is in process to determine existing topography and actual City right-of-way limits. We are awaiting final review of deliverables by the surveyor.
- **Madrid Boulevard Warranty Work** – The placement of thermoplastic striping is complete.
- **Palm Avenue between Chasteen Street to McGregor Street Road Closure** – The project has been completed and the road is now open to traffic. The sand and hay bales will be removed next week. The street sweeping has been completed.



Police

- **National Volunteer Week** – We want to take some time to highlight our Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program. The program began in 1997 when Brian Masters and ten other U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members joined the Punta Gorda Police Department as Marine Officer Assistant Volunteers. These volunteers assisted the Marine Officer by patrolling the canals and the Peace River. The following year the program expanded to include office staff and someone to welcome visitors at the front window. In 1999 traffic control training was added to assist with parades and events and in 2006 parking enforcement and marine code enforcement were also added. Currently the VIP program have over 80 volunteers assisting with all aspects of the police department including vehicle patrol, marine patrol, bike patrol, records, data entry, community services, the pension board, the community garden, criminal investigations, accreditation, and more! 820 hours of volunteer time were provided in March alone. We appreciate our volunteers and everything they do for this community we love!
- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Aug. 23 with oral board interviews scheduled on Aug. 24 and Aug. 25. 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.
- **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 Aug. 30.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Fall Semester of 2021 and Spring Semester 2022. 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.pgdjobs.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.

Fire Department

- **Thank you Lieutenant Jeff Wright** – One of Punta Gorda FIRE Department's own members, Lieutenant Jeff Wright, found himself in the middle of an emergency scene only this time it was off duty while he was at home. An SUV crashed into a house in Port Charlotte a couple houses away from Jeff's house and he heard the loud crash. Jeff and some of his family members, including his fiancé, Jenna Blackway from City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department, ran over to assist. What they found was an SUV inside the home which ended up pinning the homeowner underneath a refrigerator. While bystanders called 911 Jeff Wright helped to lift the refrigerator off the homeowner and waited for the fire department to arrive. We wanted to recognize Jeff for his willingness to act and provide help to someone in need even off duty. We as a City are proud of you for your efforts are thankful to have you as part of our City family.



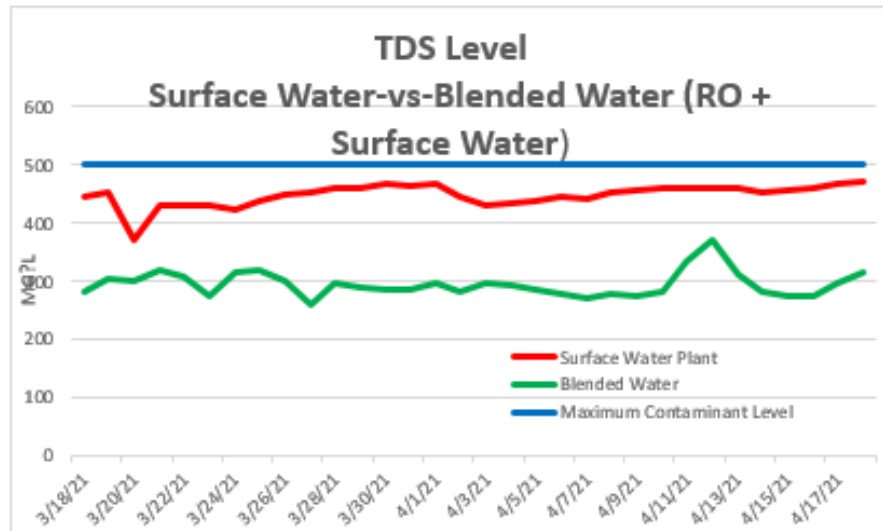
Utilities

Utilities Administration

- **Golf Course Boulevard and Challenger Boulevard** – Contractor drained, cut and capped the 18 inch force main. An 18 inch valve was installed on one side of the cut to prevent draining the pipe to reconnect when the storm drain pipe is installed.
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant Filter Clear well Project** – Contractor completed installing all the cover components and hand railing. County Building Department and the design engineer inspected the completed work.



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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 51.2 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.3 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 Apr. 2020 3.40” Apr. 2021 3.03”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 11 ppm – Total hardness 192 ppm
- TDS for Apr. 22 – Current 386 ppm, Low 386 ppm, High 605 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 523 ppm
- Reservoir Apr. 22 – Current 5.12’, Record Low 4.7’, Record High 5.78’, 55 Year Avg. 5.10’

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.
- **Donation Review Committee** – (representative of non-profit organization related to history of City) Meets quarterly, as needed, immediately following meetings of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Five member board. Three of the total five members will be appointed from the Historic Preservation Advisory Board membership. Reviews nonmonetary donations received by the City and recommends acceptance or rejection of same.
- **Code Enforcement** – (one alternate) Meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.

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:
 - Esthetics by Crissy K, 318 Tamiami Trail, #222
 - Premier Flooring, 411 Cross Street, Unit 112
 - Sugar Chic Boutique, 318 Tamiami Trail, #223