

Weekly Highlights Report May 14, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – Sanitation services have been making headlines across southwest Florida as municipalities and companies have been struggling to meet the needs of residents. We are fortunate in the City of Punta Gorda to have a Sanitation Department, led by Hope Petkus, that puts customer service and fiscal responsibility to our residents at the top of the priority list. These 19 individuals representing the Sanitation Department are critically important to maintaining safe living conditions in the city. Their work often goes unnoticed, unless there is a problem and the garbage is not picked up at the usual time. I'd like to thank each of our Sanitation employees for the work they do every single day.



I'm told that every couple of years or so the city gets asked what the cost savings would be if the city only provided garbage pick-up once per week rather than twice. The resulting analysis has consistently shown that is not significant savings because the amount of total garbage picked up is still the same. It is just spread differently.

Another good question about sanitation services recently posed was why the city is not buying "sidearm" trucks and cutting staff. Other than the cost of a single use vehicle and limitations of a single use business model the answer is actually fairly straightforward - service level. It has been discussed and decided many times before that people do not just want another commercial provider type truck coming down the street picking up a can. The service level we provide includes boxes beside the cans, cans that people can't get to the curb, miscellaneous types of refuse when residents come and go for the season, heavy material, bags that are out instead of cans, etc. We pick up what you put out. People don't like to be limited to a can. We also control our own services so that we do not have the types of incidents being experienced in other municipalities. Between the difference in cost of trucks and maintaining other levels of service delivery, we would essentially need to double our routes. One truck, one operator, one can at each location would certainly be easier, but service levels would drop dramatically. That is what people pay for, service level, and the rate is quite reasonable.

Sanitation services seemed to be a recurring theme last week. In exploring the house I have recently moved into in Punta Gorda Isles I discovered an in-ground vault outside. It was round, filled with water and about three feet deep. I removed as much of the water as I could but still couldn't read what the paper tag on the bottom of the vault said. As usual, I reached out to the Public Works Director, Rick Keeney, to see if he had any idea what the vault was used for. Sure enough it was used for garbage. Back in the day the city had side door garbage pick-up. The sanitation department used Cushman scooters and would empty the garbage from galvanized cans in the vault, to the scooter, to the mother ship. Talk about service!

We are proud of the service levels we offer residents of the city and take the responsibility of providing those services at the best value possible seriously. This is a special city that needs each and every one of our employees for us to be able 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.

- **City Council** – City Council will meet at 9 a.m. on May 19 at the Historic City Hall. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Sign Code Ordinance
 - Annexation of the Public Works/Utilities Campus
 - Complete Street Improvements for East Virginia Avenue
 - Event Permits

The meeting will be available on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw

- **Important Notice for Utility Customers** – Effective Jun. 1, pre-Covid policies of assessing penalties for late payment and shutting off water service on past due account will resume. This will apply to all accounts with a past due balances. Payments made by credit card will incur the same processing fee that was in place before Covid concessions were granted.
- **Florida Power and Light Update** – In the last two weeks, FPL has pulled 32 more vacated poles where wires were relocated to new poles. There are 252 double poles currently out there, and 164 of them are ready to be pulled, as wires have been relocated to the new poles. There are 88 additional poles that still have wires on them and they are awaiting Comcast and other utility companies to move the wires before they can schedule the poles for removal. Comcast is currently scheduled to relocate wires on 25 of those poles, and another 34 poles have wires that need to be relocated by other utility companies. To date, 286 old poles have been removed of the 538 locations where there new poles have been installed. The hardening project will continue to take place in different locations throughout the City well into next year. We will continue to hold bi-weekly update calls with both utility companies as this project progresses, to insure we keep things moving and all properties get restored after the new installations. If you see wooden stakes behind the poles around the City, those are locations that FPL plans to install new poles at in future months. Residents who will be affected by these installations will be contacted by their sub-contractors as they move around the City, so residents can stay informed of their scheduled dates. If you have a more than one pole in your front yard and an old pole that hasn't been taken down, if wires are hanging on the new pole or any other concern about this project, please email Mayor Matthews with your name, address and contact phone and email along with a photo, and send to lmattews@cityofpuntagordafl.com. The City Manager and Mayor Matthews are sharing the emails with both companies so all properties get restored.
- **Promote Punta Gorda “Small Business Spotlight”** Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association is located at 2001 Shreve Street (941) 637-1655.

Products and Services offered: The Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association (PGICA) - which began in 1962 with 62 members - is a dynamic not-for-profit organization with the mission to enhance the quality of life in Punta Gorda Isles as a vibrant and unique waterfront community. Now with more than 4,000 Punta Gorda Isles members, the enhancement of this wonderful community continues daily. The PGICA provides the general public with educational programs and classes on a wide variety of topics including finances and investing, travel, fitness, health and safety, music, fishing, art, dancing, theater, and gardening. Also offered are more than 40 exclusive clubs and groups to PGICA members who enjoy tennis, boating, sewing, cards and other games, fishing, kayaking, diving, bowling, and many more. And if your special hobby or interest isn't yet



represented by a club or group ... you can easily establish one and begin the enjoyment of sharing with new Punta Gorda Isles Friends. Available for use by the public, the beautiful Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association facilities include a lobby and reception area, an auditorium with a capacity of 225 people, classrooms and meeting rooms, a commercial catering kitchen, tennis courts, picnic pavilion with grill, outdoor fountain, and lush tropical landscaping.

What makes your business special?

The commitment and time dedicated by the member volunteers would be the envy of any organization. More than 3,000 volunteer hours are logged annually to assist at the reception desk and front offices, create "The Commentator" monthly magazine, and perform various duties for special events. The board of directors consists of the President, President-Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, and Past-President, and also includes active board appointees as: Center Administrator; Membership Director; Education Director; Health, Safety, and Welfare Director; External Relations Director; Government Liaison; and Member Activities Director.



The hours and contributions by these individuals are immeasurable and contribute greatly to the benefit of the entire community.

How does your business help the community?

The Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association is a not-for-profit organization which also works in conjunction with several other not-for-profit agencies to promote a healthy and vibrant community. We encourage doing business in our Punta Gorda community and offer many discounts. "The Commentator" monthly magazine, which is full of valuable information, is delivered to our members' homes and featured digitally on our website at pgica.org. Additionally, the PGICA maintains the Punta Gorda Isles signs, participates in the Neighborhood Marine Watch; sponsors the Annual Christmas Boat Parade, and, of course, communicates and interacts regularly with the City of Punta Gorda, the Police Department and the Fire Department, and stays actively involved with the chambers of commerce and other community organizations.

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

Many members aren't aware of our "lending closet." which is actually the size of a "lending garage!" Included with their annual membership comes the use of these helpful items at any time. You never know when you are going to have visitors, or the need for yourself for folding tables and chairs, a bicycle, tricycle, car seat, ladder, stroller, walker, traffic cones, high chair, commode chair, potty chair, crutches, portable crib, hand truck, toy truck, cane, knee scooter ... and more.



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

The Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association invites the general public to **BOOK THEIR SPECIAL EVENTS HERE NOW!** This wonderful, full-service venue nestled in Punta Gorda is often forgotten ... meaning you could be in luck. Space includes a beautiful lobby, classy auditorium, and full commercial catering kitchen with everything needed. An auditorium style events seats 225 people; an event with tables and chair seats 160; and an event with tables, chairs and dance floor seats 125 people. (Hello, wedding planners!) All audio/visual equipment, kitchen supplies, portable bar, tables, padded chairs and more are available on-site. Lovely outdoor settings available as well.

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/#>
- May 15, Wing Fest, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Trail, for more information visit www.smugglersevents.com
- May 15, A Day of Celtic Music is being co-sponsored by the Cultural Heritage Center and Fishermen's Village, 1200 West Retta Esplanade, from 12pm - 4pm. This event is announcing the opening the Youth Museum and Cultural Heritage Center at Punta Gorda History Park in September. There will be five Celtic Bands will playing music throughout Fishermen's Village. This is a day for our community to celebrate culture together.
- May 20, PG Social House Moonlight Market, 258 W. Marion Ave
- 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 28, Leroy's Kickoff to Summer Fundraiser, 201 W. Marion Ave
- May 28, 29, 30, Punta Gorda Seafood & Music Festival, City Marketplace, 115 Tamiami Trail, for more information visit [Paragon Festivals \(paragonartevents.com\)](http://paragonartevents.com)
- May 31, Memorial Day Veterans Race, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For more information visit www.memorialdayrace.org
- May 31, Memorial Day Car Show
- July 3, 4, Fourth-Fest Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit www.smugglersevents.com
- July 3, 4, Fisherman's Village Independence Weekend Celebration, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, for more information contact mkting@fishville.com

Lot Mowing Program

- Weather permitting, the City will begin a new mowing cycle on May 17.

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – Parks and Recreation Master Plan**



It's time to look into the future to see the changes that are coming to the City's parks! Watch the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Video Update #25 to learn more about the upcoming Nature Park Project that will enhance access at



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WC2cWRIApE> . Watch video #10 to learn more about Nature Park <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGkxE0ZovfE&t=0s>. For more information about the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update, please visit <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/visitors/punta-gorda-pathways/park-recreation-master-plan>

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Channel Marker Inspections** – The Peace River Sail and Power Squadron volunteered to inspect City maintained channel markers. There were two boats teams consisting of three people on each boat that shared the responsibility of handling the boat, collecting and recording waypoint data and taking photographs. Approximately 73 channels markers were inspected and located utilizing the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates (latitude and longitude). This data was then compared to the data with the United States Coast Guard Light List. A report with photos was submitted to the City indicating the channel markers were in good condition; however the GPS coordinates for a few markers were not consistent with United States Coast Guard Light List. This information will be followed up with staff. The data collection exercise was performed on Apr. 26. Post processing data and creating the report and work books was tedious and lengthy; this information was submitted to the City on May 9. The Canal Maintenance Division is grateful for all the work the volunteers from the Peace River Sail and Power Squadron performed and look forward to working with them in the future.



- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has eight projects under construction and 14 projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. All seawall replacement projects are completed for Burnt Store Isles this fiscal year. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 16 locations.
 - Crews patched/repared 37' linear feet of seawall cap/seams.
 - Crews removed one large piling, one large tree from the waterway.
 - Crews replaced two dock boards at Ponce De Leon Park.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Ramp Improvements** – The City annually schedules sidewalk ramp intersection improvements at various locations for accessibility. Staff and the contractor are reviewing the estimated Statements of Work prior to processing.
- **Adrienne Street Pier** – After further assessment, the pier will remain closed to the public for additional work.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Grading work at the end of Almar Drove is underway and is anticipated to be completed next week.
- **King Street Survey and Plan** – The survey is complete and under City review for a street plan.

Police

- **Click It or Ticket** – Next week the national Click It or Ticket campaign kicks off and agencies throughout the country will be focused on enforcing seat belt violations and educating drivers on the importance of wearing seatbelts. Make sure you are wearing your seatbelt whenever you get in the car. Seatbelts save lives!



- **Police Appreciation Week** – In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation which designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as National Police Week. This week is a time to reflect and honor those law enforcement officers that have paid the ultimate sacrifice. In recognition of National Police Week, the Punta Gorda Police Department Business Advisory Council, Papa John’s Pizza, and the Gateway Worship Center supplied all the PGPD officers and professional staff with lunch and dinner throughout the entire week. The members of the Business Advisory Council include John Wright (Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce), Sue Randall (Village Fish Market), Jim Sanders (Sandstar Modeling and Five Star Realty), James Cabbage (Regions Bank), Danny Nix (Nix and Associates), Nancy Johnson (Team Punta Gorda), Patti Allen (Fisherman’s Village), Cherie George (Gettel Automotive Group), and John Beane (Presley Beane Financial Services). The Punta Gorda Police Department would like to thank the Business Advisory Council, Gateway Worship Center, and Papa Johns for their generosity and support. We appreciate all of you!
- **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

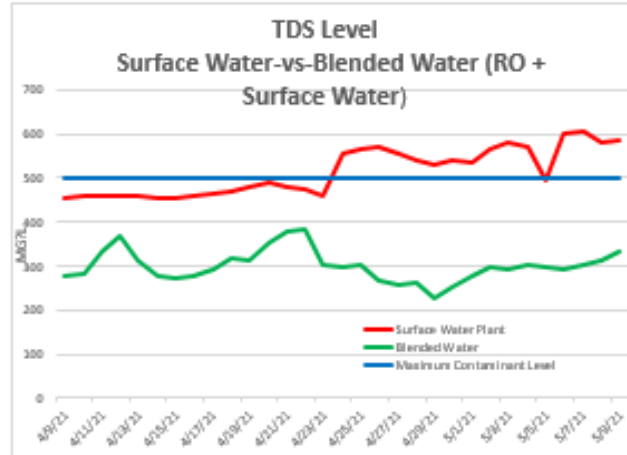
- **Emergency Medical Services Audit** –The Fire Department received notification last week that the Florida Department of Health would be conducting a random audit of EMS operations for the Fire Department. The audit is specifically focused on EMS operations, personnel training and documentation as well as all advanced life support equipment. State administrative rules require the Bureau to conduct inspections of Emergency Medical Service Providers on a random basis. These inspections are conducted to ensure compliance with state law governing the operation and provision of basic and advanced life support. The department has historically passed the inspection with excellent comments made by the inspector. This inspection went extremely well, we are appreciative of all the hard work and preparation that goes into preparing and performing during the process.



In one official report, Inspector Shelly Lewis noted *“Excellent Inspection, personnel and facilities were outstanding. Engine-2 was well supplied and clean. Crew members were polite and familiar with their equipment. Thank you for your service for the citizens and visitors of Punta Gorda as well as the State of Florida the citizens and visitors of Punta Gorda can be proud of the professional and quality service you provide.”*

Utilities

- **Groundwater R.O. Chart –**



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 60.4 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.6 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 May 2020 2.26” May 2021 0.00”
- 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 140 ppm
- TDS for May 13 – Current 314 ppm, Low 314 ppm, High 625 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 507 ppm
- Reservoir May 13 – Current 5.06’, Record Low 4.32’, Record High 5.43’, 55 Year Avg. 5.05’

City Clerk

- **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@cityofpuntafordafl.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>.

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.
- **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.