

**CITY OF PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2021, 10:00 A.M.**

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Carey, Cummings, Matthews, Miller, Prafke

CITY EMPLOYEES PRESENT: Kristin Simeone, Finance; Rick Keeney, Public Works; Joan LeBeau, Urban Design; Pamela Davis, Police; Ray Briggs, Fire; City Manager Murray; City Clerk Smith

Mayor Matthews called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

Local State of Emergency Elsa - An Emergency Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Punta Gorda, Florida, declaring a State of Local Emergency and providing for emergency governmental operations related to Tropical Storm Elsa if deemed necessary and in conjunction with Charlotte County; providing for termination of emergency powers, providing for conflicts and providing an effective date.

Mayor Matthews explained the purpose of the special meeting was to discuss declaring a local state of emergency due to Tropical Storm Elsa, noting the State of Florida and Charlotte County had already declared a state of emergency.

Fire Chief Ray Briggs presented information related to the status of the storm, including its projected track, intensity, arrival time and potential impacts on the City. He mentioned there was a slight tornado threat, noting flooding and storm surge were a concern. He stated the storm was not projected to intensify to hurricane strength after it entered the Florida Straits. He announced a self-service sandbag operation would be held at the Hounds on Henry Park, noting several Public Service Announcements would be issued.

Mayor Matthews explained boats could not be tied across the canal unless a tropical storm or hurricane warning had been issued and the storm was imminent (within the next 24 hours) and was only allowed on a short-term basis.

City Manager Murray read the ordinance by title, explaining how the declaration benefited the City.

Councilmember Cummings **MOVED** approval of the emergency ordinance, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Prafke.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

Mayor Matthews explained staff was well informed and prepared to act according to established protocol and would activate the emergency management team if necessary. **Councilmember Miller** inquired whether trash would be picked up on Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

City Manager Murray replied if it was safe, the trucks would be on the road.

Mr. Rick Keeney, Public Works Director, confirmed the intent was to pick up trash, noting a few trucks were sent out this date to do a sweep. He pointed out Public Works staff were in the process of picking up all of the barricades, netting, etc. from the July 4th event. He estimated sand would be available to the public at the Hounds on Henry Park around 2:00 p.m.

Councilmember Prafke pointed out the City did not check private homes to check whether individuals had made storm preparations, noting it was up to citizens to secure their homes.

Discussion ensued regarding the extensive preparations made and actions taken by the City and emergency management teams in advance of a storm and use of the Herald Court Centre parking garage for City vehicles and by residents.

Councilmember Carey opined the City was a well-oiled machine and well organized when dealing with storms, thanking staff for a job well done.

Councilmember Prafke concurred.

Mayor Matthews stated it was incredible to watch the emergency team in action, concluding the City was lucky to have such a wonderful group of employees.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Mayor

City Clerk