

## Weekly Highlights Report Feb. 11, 2022

### City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – Great things are happening in Punta Gorda! At the last City Council meeting, Council approved moving forward with acquiring a therapy dog. The acquisition of the new therapy dog and the training are being funded through generous donations from area residents. We have also had local groups interested in sponsoring ongoing expenses for the program. The Punta Gorda Police Department (PGPD) believes in doing everything possible to help address the mental health of our citizens, visitors, and employees. In an effort to help comfort those affected by emotional distress, the Police Department is proposing the creation of a therapy dog program. There are a number of police agencies throughout the country that have developed therapy dog programs and have found them to be very successful in helping to reduce anxiety, anger, and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The PGPD Veterans Crisis Assistance Team (VCAT) was established in December 2020. Adding a therapy dog as a resource for the team will enhance our ability to assist the veterans in the community.



Additionally, the therapy dog will be utilized after critical incidents to help affected community members cope with stress. The dog will also be used to improve employee morale and for outreach at community events. The PGPD will utilize the American Kennel Club Recognized Therapy Dog organization, Brevard County Sheriff's Office "Paws and Stripes College" to facilitate the selection of the dog (which is a rescue). The therapy dog will enter a 12-week training course that teams up the dog with an inmate to prepare the dog for its handler and a 40-hour training course that the handler will attend. The training sessions are a free program for law enforcement agencies. Upon graduation, the canine team will be tested for a certification from the United K9s Therapy K9 Certification course. The certification is nationally recognized and will be valid for two years. We are looking forward to welcoming our new addition to the department.

Also, this past week the city received the excellent news that the City of Punta Gorda Finance Department is being recognized for its professionalism and skill once again. The city was recently notified that the annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, has met the requirements to be awarded GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The GFOA established the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program (Certificate Program) in 1945 to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare annual comprehensive financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal. Readers can access the entire comprehensive financial report at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12175/637553018477800000>. Congratulations to the whole Finance team! Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at [citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com) or by calling (941) 575-3302.

- **Rebuild Florida Mitigation General Infrastructure Grant** – The City was awarded a \$2,521,250 grant to resolve flooding and improve water quality treatment in the Boca Grande neighborhood. Unlike many other areas of Punta Gorda, this older community doesn't have a master drainage plan. The existing drainage consists of a haphazard network of roadside swales..

- **A Message from the PGI Islanders** – The PGI Islanders Cruising Club is organizing the Canal Cleanup Day on Mar. 5 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and would appreciate all your help making this another successful day. We all enjoy a trip through the canals here in PGI whether you're fishing, out on a sunset happy hour tour with friends or just transiting out for a trip down the harbor. Our waterways deserve a little sweat and elbow grease to keep them looking beautiful. What a great way to get together with your friends and have a fun time for a couple hours! If you do not have a boat and would like to participate let us know and we can try and team you up with another boat owner. Maps of the territories, trash bags and instructions will be provided. Best of all we will be having a luncheon at the PGICA Pavilion afterwards for all the volunteers from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please email us your name, address and best way to contact you so we can assign a specific territory convenient to you. Could you also let us know what type of vessel and how many people with be helping you and attending the luncheon? To sign up please email us at: Joe OBrien [jfobrien5@comcast.net](mailto:jfobrien5@comcast.net) or call 610-639-8131 or Rich Schmidt [graphicsguymd@hotmail.com](mailto:graphicsguymd@hotmail.com) or call 240-418-4575.
- **FPL/Comcast Update** – Beginning the week of Feb. 15 (weather permitting), a Florida Power and Light contractor will be installing a new utility pole near the corner of Aqui Esta Dr. and Coronado Dr. Aqui Esta Dr. will be closed to thru traffic from Bal Harbor Blvd. to Coronado Dr. Only local traffic will be allowed on Aqui Esta Dr. from Bal Harbor Blvd. to La Salina Ct. Traffic on Aqui Esta Dr. will not have access to Coronado Dr.; and traffic on Coronado Dr. will not be able to access Aqui Esta Dr. due to Aqui Esta Dr. being closed from Coronado Dr. to La Salina Ct. The contractor will install temporary traffic control signs to help citizens navigate the construction area. The project is estimated to take about four hours to be completed. 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 WITH PHOTOS to support your request, and send to [lmattews@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:lmattews@cityofpuntagordafl.com). The City Manager and Mayor Matthews are sharing the emails with both companies so all properties get restored.
- **Text My Gov** – Need information about the City? Try Text My Gov. The service uses a mobile phone's regular text messaging service to allow people to quickly find links, documents or text that answers their questions. No app download is needed. It allows our residents and visitors to report issues such as code violations or report issues with city infrastructure twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. A picture can also be added when reporting an issue or violation and the service sends the information immediately to city staff to have the issue resolved. To use the service simply text "hi" to (941) 347-0747. Answers to common questions are available 24/7 through website searches and preprogrammed responses. Don't have an immediate answer? The question will go to a designated mailbox to insure you get a timely response.

## Urban Design

### 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/#>
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street, for all community event and class information visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- Feb. 11 and 13, Big Boy Toy Expo, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center. For more information, visit <https://www.bigboytoyexpo.com/>

- Feb. 12, CHNEP Trail Blaze and BioBlitz at CHEC, 9:30 a.m. at Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center at Alligator Creek Preserve. For more information visit <https://www.chnep.org/monthly-volunteer-events>.
- Feb. 14, The Boys of D63 concert at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church buy tickets and learn more at <http://www.bspconline.org>.
- Feb. 14, through Apr. 18 Zimsculpt at the Peace River Botanical Gardens. For more information visit <https://peacrivergardens.org/zimsculpt>.
- Feb. 19, St. Vincent de Paul Walk for the Poor, Gilchrist Park. For more information visit, <https://sacredheartfl.org/serving-the-poor/>.
- Feb. 23, the Punta Gorda Historical Society will be hosting a variety of musicians in the Park on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, through May 2022 from 4 to 6 p.m. Bring your own chair and beverage of choice, peruse the Food Trucks for your dining pleasure. In lieu of admission fees, the Punta Gorda Historical Society requests your donations for the ongoing maintenance of our four History Park buildings. For more information visit [www.puntagordahistory.com](http://www.puntagordahistory.com).
- Feb. 25 and 26, Florida Frontier Days, History Park, 501 Shreve St. For more information contact, Frank Desguin, (941)769-1270.
- Feb. 26, 11th Annual Punta Gorda Pub Crawl. For more information and tickets, visit <https://puntagordapubcrawl.com/index.html>.
- Feb. 26, Boys and Girls Club of Charlotte County Farm to Table Fundraiser, Laishley Park. For more information and tickets, visit <https://www.bgcofcc.org/>.
- Mar. 4, Peter Mayer Group\* and the Scott Trio Concert at the Woman's Club, 118 Sullivan Street. Tickets can only be purchased through: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/peter-mayer-group-w-scott-kirby-trio-tickets-250973527577?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.
- Mar. 6, Rotary Club Taste of Punta Gorda, Laishley Park. For more information, visit <https://tasteofpuntagorda.org/>
- Mar. 12, Punta Gorda ½ Marathon, beginning and ending in Laishley Park. For more information, visit <https://www.puntagordahalf.com/>
- Mar. 14, Everly Set concert at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church buy tickets and learn more at <http://www.bspconline.org>
- Mar. 19-20, Peace River National Art Show, Laishley Park. For more information, visit <https://visualartcenter.org/collections/peace-river-national-art-festival>
- Mar. 18-19, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For more information, visit <https://www.premierauctiongroup.com/vehicles>
- Mar. 26, Pedal and Play in Paradise, Laishley Park. For more information visit <http://pedalandplayinparadise.com/>
- April 2, Strongman Competition, Laishley Park Pavilions. For more information visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/2666695273476742/>

### **Lot Mowing Program**

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

## **Planning**

- **The Planning Corner – Soliciting** – There continue to be numerous reports of various companies and contractors going door to door soliciting their services. Soliciting is specifically prohibited within the city limits. In addition, these companies may not be licensed to perform work within the City. If you receive a visit from a solicitor, please contact Code Compliance at (941) 575-3352. If this occurs after regular business hours or on the weekend, please contact the Police non-emergency number, (941) 639-4111.

### The Planning Corner



## **Finance**

- **Billing and Collections Service Update** – For the QUICKEST response to inquiries or concerns about your utility account, please contact the Billing and Collections office by sending an email to [pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com) rather than trying to reach the office by phone. Due to an unprecedented staffing shortage, phone calls may go to voice mail and be subject to a delay in response time. Thank you for your patience and assistance.

## **Public Works**

### **Canal Maintenance**

- **Manatee Awareness** – Canal Maintenance is reminding people on the water to slow down and look out for migrating manatees this time of year. As water temperatures drop manatees tend to travel to the internal canal systems in order to stay warm. Manatees depend on water generally warmer than 68 degrees Fahrenheit to survive the winter. Recently there have been several manatees spotted in the Sunset Lake area, which is the body of water located near Casey Key Dr. and Surfbird Ct. So please go slow and look out below to allow them to swim safely.
- **Seawall Assessment** – City staff is currently performing the Annual Seawall Assessment during low tide periods through Mar. City staff will be inspecting an estimated 303,868 lineal feet of seawalls in the southerly half of Punta Gorda Isles and all of Burnt Store Isles from the waterside while traversing canals in a boat. Residents may see city staff in a boat close to their seawalls while inspecting the condition of seawalls. To date staff has collected 3,723 points of data covering 255,658 lineal feet. The southerly half of Punta Gorda Isle has been completed and crews will be moving over to Burnt Store Isles next week.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – Punta Gorda Isles has 44 seawall replacement projects scheduled for this fiscal year and the seawall replacement contractor has eight projects under construction and six projects completed. Burnt Store Isles has eight seawall replacement projects scheduled for this fiscal year and the seawall contractor has three projects under construction at this time. A seawall replacement project can consist of multiple properties. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
  - Crews installed channel markers #10 mirror in Ponce De Leon inlet.
  - Crews manufactured 50 (10' foot) seawall panels.
- **Seawall Replacement Schedule** – The annual Seawall Replacement Work Program can be found on the City of Punta Gorda website under Canal Maintenance <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12550/637643718591830000>. Every year the City replaces approximately 12,000 linear feet of seawall. By utilizing the Seawall Assessment Data, the seawall replacement program is planned a year in advance (unexpected seawall failures or seawalls that are inspected and found to be at extreme risk of failure are given top priority and may bump planned projects to the following year).





## **Engineering**

- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – The engineering consultant has received additional survey data for the project and is incorporating it into the project. The engineer of record anticipates submitting the Environmental Resource Permit application to the Southwest Florida Water Management District in Feb.
- **Henry Street Sidewalk** – Final construction plan revisions and drainage calculations are being completed. Coordination will continue with FDOT on work within their drainage easement and the sidewalk connection at US41.
- **Wayfinding Signage** – Foundation bases for the proposed way finding signs have been completed. Installation of new signs will follow completion of manufacturing and concrete curing.

## **Sanitation**

- **President's Day holiday** – The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Feb. 21 for the President's Day holiday. Residents of the City of Punta Gorda will notice NO CHANGE in their trash, yard waste or recycling collections during this holiday. Commercial customers will notice NO CHANGE in collection service during this holiday. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. through Fri.

## **Police**

- **VIP Program** - The Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 699 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of January 2022. Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! 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](mailto:vip@pgorda.us).



## **Open Positions**

- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. We will be holding a virtual testing process in June. Applications must be received by May 25. The written exam will be completed online anytime between June 1, and June 9 with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on June 20, and June 21. We are currently only accepting applications from candidates who are currently law enforcement certified or Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department will be testing for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher on Feb. 28 at 9 a.m. Our dispatchers handle 911 calls in the city and dispatch for both the police department and fire department. Previous dispatching experience is not needed. If you are a good communicator, are able to multi-task, and can remain calm under pressure, you may have what it takes to be one of the “unseen” heroes of public safety! Visit [www.pgpdjobs.com](http://www.pgpdjobs.com) or call (941) 575-5571 for more information.

- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer Semester and Fall Semester of 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 and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today! The deadline to apply for the Summer Semester of 2022 is March 4.
- **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 dedicated 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](http://www.pgpdjobs.com) or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us).**

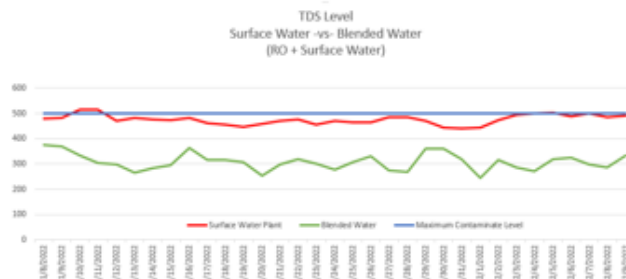
## Fire

- **Training** – The fire department has been training this week with a new piece of equipment. The BlitzFire Nozzle is a portable master stream device capable of flowing up to 500 gallons a minute and can cover up to 200 feet! This appliance can be set up at the scene of a structure fire and left unmanned allowing personnel to work on other tasks while having a constant stream of water assisting to mitigate the emergency.



## Utilities

- **R.O. Plant**



## **Water Treatment Plant Operations**

- 55.7 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.0 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 750 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 1500 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Jan. 2021 0.20” Jan. 2022 1.80” Feb. 2021 1.20” Feb. 2022 0.60”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "moderately hard" – Grains of Hardness 9 ppm –Total hardness 148 ppm
- TDS Feb. 10 – Current 277 ppm, Low 261 ppm, High 661 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 474 ppm
- Reservoir Feb. 10 – Current 5.10', Record Low 4.89', Record High, 5.87' 57 Year Average 5.20'.

## **Wastewater Treatment**

- **Maintenance** – The contracted vendor continues the work of repairing the walls of the North tank at the Master Pumping Facility. Team members were able to haul and inject 126,000 gallons of bio-solids to field seven this week.

- **Operations** – The average daily flow for the past week was 2.72 million gallons for a total of 19.05 million gallons of wastewater being treated this week.

## City Clerk

### **Charter Review Committee**

- Review of the City’s Charter, a process that occurs once every six years, is underway. Video of the Committee’s meetings are available on the City’s [Agendas and Meetings page](#) and [YouTube channel](#). The Committee’s next meeting will be held in Council Chambers at City Hall (326 West Marion Avenue) on Feb. 14 at 9:00 a.m. Topics for discussion at the next meeting include establishing how to stagger four-year terms, term limits, councilmember compensation and the candidate residency requirement. All meetings of the Charter Review Committee are open to the public and attendance is encouraged.

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (two alternate) Meets monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency is 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.
- **Code Enforcement** – (two 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.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (one regular and one alternate) Meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Two members must reside within the Historic District. Three year terms, maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more 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 archaeological preservation and its community benefits.
- **Police Officers’ Pension Board** – (one City resident member). Meets quarterly and as called in City Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents at-large, two general employees and one member appointed by the Board. Four-year terms, no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees’ 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:

- Bowerman Real Estate & Appraisals, 2750 W Marion Avenue
- Jamie Kirschner DC Corp, 25166 Marion Avenue
- K9 Glam Squad LLC, 525 E Olympia Avenue
- Lori J Art, 1600 Bobolink Court
- Los Mariachis Bar & Grill, 3941 Tamiami Trail
- Rob’s Home Remodeling, 4429 Almar Drive
- Service First Heating and Cooling, 275 Boca Grande Blvd, Unit 101
- Sure Radiance, 1105 Taylor Road
- Freeman Vacation Rental, 280 Belvedere Court