

Weekly Highlights Report Sept. 16, 2022

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – The City of Punta Gorda held the first of two budget hearings this past week. Protecting our residents' health, welfare and safety is the City's top priority. As previously presented, Public Safety remains the most significant expenditure category within the General Fund budget, and protecting service levels with increasing call volumes is paramount.

To accomplish that goal, the Punta Gorda Police Department (PD) proposed budget includes adding additional personnel to support the investigation of time-consuming and complex cases and the ever-increasing fraud cases and to manage the increased complexity and responsibilities regarding crime scene response and evidence handling. The Department uses a COPS grant to fund personnel to spread the impact over multiple budget cycles. Operating expenditures experiencing increases are repair and maintenance for vehicles and various specialty equipment, an increase in cost for purchased services, and supply costs that continue to increase due to inflationary concerns.

The PD capital outlay of \$611,030 includes vehicles and equipment to support staff positions, including six replacement vehicles, a taser replacement program, a car camera replacement program, the second year of the patrol rifle program to standardize weapons, a radio enhancement program, needed mobile and portable radio equipment, SWAT, and training room equipment.

The Department encompasses many programs designed to enhance trust in the community by promoting transparency, procedural justice, and community partnerships. Some of the programs include in-car video cameras, body-worn cameras, community advisory boards, youth programs, homeless outreach, de-escalation tactics, internal affairs investigations (that are scrutinized through various laws, processes, and agencies), national data reporting, veterans crisis assistance teams, officer background checks, and scenario-based training. The Department will continue these programs to meet its mission of providing the highest level of professional police services and delivering outstanding customer service while partnering with our community.

One of the Department's goals for response time on all calls for service is an average of 5:00 minutes from dispatch. Results in patrol response times are currently 4:06 minutes. Another goal is to achieve a monthly Quality Assurance survey approval rating of a minimum of 95%. Survey results indicate we now have a 99.2% approval rating.

The Punta Gorda Fire Department (FD) budget includes the addition of seven firefighter/EMTs funded to address increased calls for service and to help work towards meeting minimum staffing requirements. Before the current staffing plan, the number of responders on each piece of apparatus had not increased from two since 2001. Likewise, ALS responses, safety mandates, and a multitude of services provided to the public require adequate staffing. A SAFER grant was included for these positions to fund them for several years while planning for the impact of personnel costs over multiple budget cycles.



The FD capital outlay budget of \$154,000 includes funding for a replacement vehicle, personal protective equipment, suppression equipment, medical equipment, a radio enhancement program, and bunker gear and equipment for the new positions.

The National Fire Protection Association standard for service response time is five minutes or less, 90% of the time. The most recent average emergency response time for fire was four minutes and 21 seconds.

We are proud of our public safety divisions' fiscal responsibility and service levels and look forward to serving our residents in FY2023. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling the main office line at (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Council Meeting** – The Punta Gorda City Council will meet on Sept. 21 at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. A few of the items of interest include:
 - An ordinance setting solid waste rates
 - Second reading of an ordinance to rezone a property from City Center to Planned Development Neighborhood submitted by SSP Associates, Inc., dba Sahasa Realty Corp.
 - Halloween road closures
 - A request to use Laishley Park after 10 p.m. for a wedding
- **City Council Budget Meeting** – The Punta Gorda City Council will meet on Sept. 21 at 5:01 p.m. at the Military Heritage Museum to set the Final Millage Rate and adopt the FY2023 Budget. The meetings will be live streamed to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw

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 [Upcoming Events – Military Heritage Museum](#)
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street; for all community events and class information, visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- The Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at [Welcome to the Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda, FL \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- Sept. 16, Recovery Candlelight Vigil, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, For more information, contact kpomerville@cbhcf.org
- Oct. 6, Charlotte High School Homecoming Parade, For more information, contact Emily.klossner@yourcharlotteschools.net
- Oct. 15, Charlotte County Out of the Darkness Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, For more information, contact tsullivan@afsp.org
- Oct. 15, Walk to end human trafficking, Wyvern Hotel, 101 E Retta Esplanade, for more information, contact 2bfree4evr@email.com
- Oct. 16, The Rock CC Anniversary Celebration, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, For more information, contact rich.therockcc@gmail.com
- Oct. 21-22, 28-29, 30-31, Haunting on the Harbor, 3815 Tamiami Tr, For more information, contact jerry@smugglers.com
- Oct. 22, Blues, Brews, and BBQ, History Park, 501 Shreve St; for more information, contact jwright@puntagorda-chamber.com

- Oct. 31, Trunk or Treat, New Life Church, 507 W. Marion Ave, For more information, contact becca@newlifeforall.church
- Nov. 5, Veterans Appreciation Parade; for more information, contact cam4fire@yahoo.com
- Nov. 12, Lighting of the village, Fishermen's Village, 1200 W Retta Esplanade; for more information, contact kburnam@fishermensvillage.com
- Nov. 19-20, Season Opener Arts & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta esplanade; for more information, contact mypromo@mypromotions.com

Lot Mowing Program

- The City started the mowing cycle this week:
 - The Historic District area east of 41 and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Avenue, E Olympia Avenue, Narranja Street, E Henry Street, and Cooper Street).
 - Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion Avenue, W. Olympia Avenue, Shreve Street, and Harvey Street)
 - PGI (Magdalena Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - Colony Point (Colony Point Drive, West Marion Avenue, Socorro Drive, and Coronado).
 - PGI (Bal Harbor Boulevard, Deborah and Casey Key Drive, Ryan Boulevard and Suzi Street).
 - PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross Drive, Whippoorwill and Turtle Dove Boulevards).
 - Burnt Store Isles (Monaco Drive, Tripoli Boulevard, Madrid Boulevard, and Macedonia Drive).
 - Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Trail, N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree).

Planning

- **Planning Corner – Capital Improvements Element (CIE)**
The purpose of the *Capital Improvements Element* is to evaluate the need for public facilities as identified in the other Comprehensive Plan elements. It includes: an analysis of the financial capability of the City to fund needed public facilities, recommended economic policies to guide the funding of those identified improvements, and a schedule of the financing and construction of improvements in a manner necessary to ensure that capital improvements are provided when required. These needed improvements are essential to meet the adopted level of service standards identified in the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.



Urban Design staff will begin updating the CIE in October. To review a copy of the element, visit the PLAN PUNTA GORDA - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE link on the City's website. There you can read the current CIE Element and the implementation strategies of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies. <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/comprehensive-plan/plan-punta-gorda-comprehensive-plan-update>

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement** – Punta Gorda Isles has 42 seawall replacement projects scheduled for the fiscal year 2021/2022. The seawall replacement contractor has 13 projects under construction with 29 projects having been completed. All of the Burnt Store Isles seawall replacement projects scheduled for the fiscal year 2021/2022 have been completed. A seawall replacement project can consist of multiple properties and a seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.

- **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).
 - Canal Maintenance crews manufactured 50 seawall panels

Engineering

- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvement project** – Staff continues working with the Engineer of Record on the revised 90% design plans.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** –
 - Swale work has been completed on Di Leuca St, Dupont, Elizabeth, Myrtle, and South Crete. The contractor will be watering as needed.
 - Work has begun on Carissa and should be completed this week.
 - Grade stakes have been installed on Maria Ct., for the contractor, the work will begin Sept 19.

- **Harborwalk parking and upland improvements** – The contractor continues to cut grade, place, and roll in subbase for parking areas at the Gilchrist Playground and Berry St. parking lots. The Gilchrist Park Playground parking lot is scheduled for completion of asphalt placement this week with striping to follow. The Gilchrist Playground is scheduled to close commencing Monday, September 19 through Friday, September 23 to accommodate the demolition of the existing sidewalk and replacement with new Harborwalk sidewalks between the Pickle Ball courts and playground. Side street ADA sidewalk ramp, curb, and paver replacement construction continues between Gilchrist and Dolly streets. Brick paver installations have commenced in the diagonal parking areas. The electrical work for decorative and bollard lights is ongoing. The FPL power pole relocation with new pole replacement is complete and connected in the park across from McGregor St. Communication with FPL continues for future power pole replacement across from Dolly St. Underground drainage pipe, basin installation and pond construction continue. Maintenance of traffic devices and perimeter project safety fence is in place for pedestrian and travelers detours.



Police

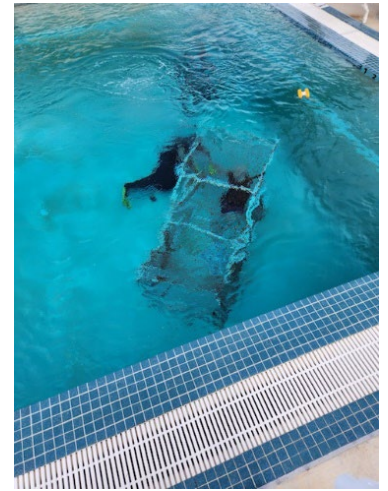
- **Watch Out for Scams** – Please remember that legitimate businesses, organizations, and government entities will **NEVER** ask you to make a payment using gift cards or cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin. If anyone calls you and requests that you make a payment by purchasing gift cards and providing the numbers or by purchasing and sending cryptocurrency, please hang up the phone! Gift cards and cryptocurrency are nearly impossible to trace and the chances of identifying the scammer and returning the money given to them is very low. If someone asks you to purchase gift cards or cryptocurrency 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.
- **VIP Program** – The Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 586 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of Aug. of 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.



- **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 Oct. Applications must be received by Oct. 6. The written exam will be completed online anytime between Oct. 7, and Oct. 14, with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on Oct. 24 and Oct. 25. We are currently only accepting applications from candidates who are currently law enforcement certified, Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible, currently enrolled in a Florida law enforcement academy, or who have prior sworn or civilian experience in the law enforcement field.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We have one testing date upcoming on Sep. 29, 2022. We are currently accepting applications to test for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher for this date. **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.**

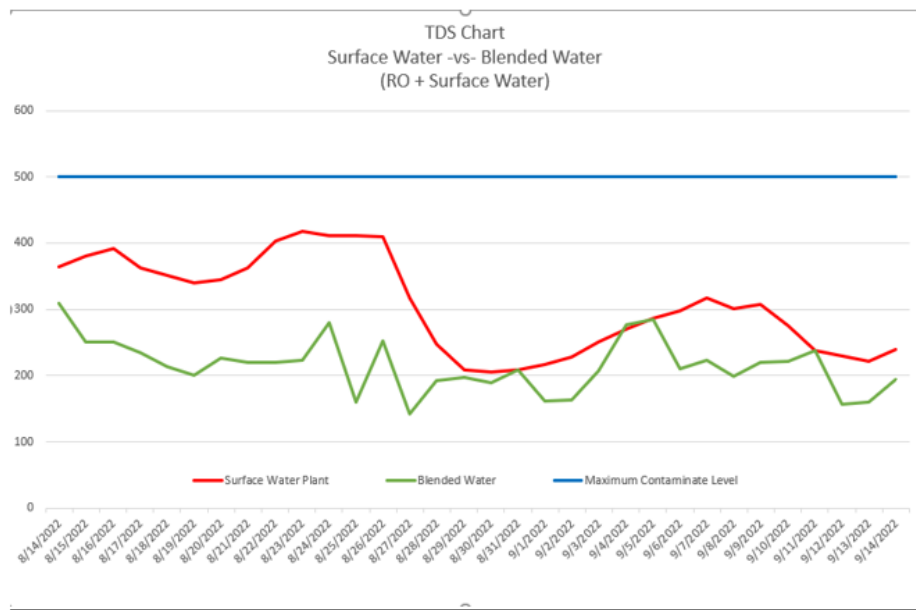
Fire

- **Dive Car Training** – The fire department hosted dive training this week at South County Pool. This training focused on low to no visibility victim removal from a submerged vehicle. Divers wore a blacked out mask and had to navigate the exterior of the dive car prop, locate and remove the victim. Once removed, surface rescue swimmers moved the dive training manikin to a backboard and out of the water to awaiting first responders.



Utilities

- **R.O. Plant**



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 43.8 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.3 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 1000 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 1000 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Sept. 2021 9.80" Sept. 2022 7.70"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "slightly hard" – Grains of Hardness 5 ppm – Total hardness 80 ppm
- TDS Sept. 15 – Current 174 ppm, Low 118 ppm, High 360 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 284 ppm
- Reservoir Sept. 15 – Current 5.76', Record Low 5.11', Record High, 7.64' 57 Year Average 5.65'

Wastewater Treatment

- **Maintenance** – Team members continue to mow and trim the plant and remote station grounds.
- **Operations** – The average daily flow for the past week was 3.41 million gallons for a total of 23.88 million gallons of wastewater being treated this week.

City Clerk

- **Parking Permits** – The City Clerk's Office has issued its 200th Historic District Parking Program Permit. The program is open to residents of the program area. More information can be found [on the City's website](#).



Current Board and Committee Vacancies (Volunteer Appointment Information Form)

- **Planning Commission** – (one alternate) Meets the 4th Monday at 2 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to amending, extending or adding to the comprehensive plan for the physical development of the City, platting or subdividing land within the City and adopting and amending a zoning ordinance.
- **Burnt Store Isles Canal Advisory Committee – (one regular)** Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be resident of Burnt Store Isles. Five member board. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code of Ordinances
- **Code Enforcement Board** – (one regular and 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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (two regular) Meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. 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 drawings and specifications.
- **Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – (one regular) Meets the third Monday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be a resident of Punta Gorda Isles. Seven member board. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code of Ordinances.

- **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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (two regular) Meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. 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 drawings and specifications.

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:
 - Cora Physical Therapy, 517 Tamiami Trail
 - Tom Geier LLC, 776 Monaco Drive
 - Lions Denn Barbershop, 1205 Elizabeth Street
 - Superior Carpet Upholstery Cleaning, 214 Wood Street, #113
 - Wallace Law Firm, 323 Hargreaves Avenue