

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

City Manager

- Citizen advisory boards and committees, overseen by the City Council's appointments, play a vital role in the government of Punta Gorda. These boards and committees are composed of dedicated citizens who bring a wealth of experience and expertise to advance the specific objectives of each advisory group. We currently have a range of openings on various boards and committees. If you're interested in contributing your skills and passion to our community, we invite you to apply through our online portal at <https://puntagorda.granicus.com/boards/forms/650/apply/>.



Here are some of the positions available:

1. **Code Enforcement Board:** We seek one member for this board, which convenes monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. Applicants must be city residents. This seven-member board, with two alternate members, serves three-year terms and requires financial disclosure. The board is responsible for adjudicating alleged City Code of Ordinances violations.
2. **Donation Review Committee:** We are looking for an art's representative for this committee, which meets at 10:00 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum on the 4th Thursday of January, April, July, and October or as needed after the Historic Preservation Advisory Board meeting. Based on established criteria and policies, the committee reviews non-monetary gift donation proposals and letters of intent, making recommendations to the City Council regarding their acceptance or rejection.
3. **General Employees' Pension Board:** We need one resident representative for this board, which meets quarterly and as called at the Military Heritage Museum. This board consists of five members, including two City residents at-large, two general employees, and one member appointed by the board. Members serve four-year terms with no maximum limit and must make financial disclosures. The board is responsible for managing the General Employees' Pension Fund.
4. **Historic Preservation Advisory Board:** We have openings for one regular and two alternate representatives on this board, which meets on the fourth Thursday at 9:00 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. The board has seven members, with two alternate members serving three-year terms. Similar to other boards, financial disclosure is required. This board identifies historically significant structures and sites for potential "Local Historic Landmark" designation or nomination to the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, it makes recommendations regarding protecting such structures and site certificates of appropriateness and promotes historic preservation in the community.

If you're interested in joining any of these boards or committees, please complete a Board Appointment Information Form at <https://bit.ly/3Cddmn0>, available online or in person at the City Clerk's office at 117 Herald Court. You can also inquire by calling (941) 575-3369.

Applicants and appointed members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Handbook for Advisory Board Members at <https://bit.ly/2YQLUci>, which covers various aspects of board and committee operations, meeting procedures, and compliance with Florida's Public Records Law and Sunshine Law.

Volunteering on one of our boards or committees serves the community and offers valuable personal growth and networking opportunities. It allows you to directly impact local government and policies while connecting with individuals in our community who share your interests. Your involvement can make a meaningful difference in Punta Gorda. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntafordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.*

- **Budget Hearing** – The FY2024 Budget Public Hearing for the [FY2024 budget](#), was unanimously passed on Sept. 20.
- **Land Development Regulations** – City Council unanimously passed new Land Development Regulation on Sept. 20 more information is available at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/urban-design/land-development-regulations>.
- **Mayor Matthews Appointed to Advocacy Committee** – The City of Punta Gorda is delighted to announce Mayor Lynne Matthews' appointment as a distinguished member of the 2023-2024 Advocacy Committee for the Florida League of Cities (FLC). This prestigious committee plays a pivotal role in garnering support among the League's membership and the state Legislature for the legislative priorities adopted by FLC members. Additionally, the Advocacy Committee is tasked with direct engagement with state elected officials to champion the FLC Legislative Action agenda and other critical issues, while also providing strategic guidance for the League's lobbying efforts. Read more at: <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/.../News/News/4167/17>.
- **Water Meter Reading System** – While we live in SW Florida – the land of sunshine and palm trees, our environment is harsh on the City's infrastructure. With the past few years of high water and winds our water meter reading system has taken a beating. Over the past few months, we have worked collaboratively within the City departments to build a plan to address this issue and rebuild a stronger more robust water reading system. Over the coming months, we will work collaboratively with outside vendors and our inside team to ensure we are once again successful. The collaboration is led by our Water Distribution Division, to perform repairs on existing equipment and build to accommodate for our growth and future growth potential, our Billing and Collections Division will work with customers to ensure their needs are met. To assist Water Distribution the City is in talks with an outside vendor to help with reading of meters while our crews are in the repair process. The information technology department is supporting all internal departments with trouble shooting, training and best practices to ensure our success.
- **Florida Department of Transportation** – US 41/Tamiami Trail from Payne Street to Rio Villa Drive: Motorists should expect intermittent lane closures during daytime and nighttime/overnight hours while crews resurface the roadway, construct curb, gutter, and sidewalk, lanes widenings, and drainage, signage, Street Light, and signalization improvements. Motorists should expect intermittent southbound and northbound lane

closures from Aqui Esta Drive to Payne Street during daytime hours from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and during nighttime/overnight hours from 8 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Motorists should use caution as crews work on the roadway. The expected project completion is late fall 2023.

- **City of Punta Gorda 2023 General Election** – Per Florida Statute 97.055, the voter registration book will close for the Nov. 7, General Election on Oct. 10. Once the voter registration book closes, the only allowable changes to a registration for the 2023 General Election are to update a voter's name, address and signature. New voter registrations after book closing will be accepted for subsequent elections. Citizens can check their registration status at the [Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections website](#) and register to vote online through the [Florida Department of State's website](#).
 - Did you know your signature can change significantly over the years? Stop by the Supervisor of Elections' Office (226 Taylor Street, Unit 120, Punta Gorda, FL 33950) to update your signature.
 - Vote-by-mail ballots will be sent to United States uniformed services members on active duty, Merchant Marine members and their spouses or dependents as well as United States citizens residing outside of the United States on Sept. 21, 2023.
- **Pickleball Courts Closed** – The pickleball courts at Gilchrist Park are closed until replacement sound panels are installed.

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 15, Recovery Candlelight Vigil, Laishley Park, for more information contact kpomerville@cbhcfl.org
- Sept 28, Charlotte High School Homecoming Parade, for more information contact Emily.klossner@yourcharlotteschools.net
- Dec. 1, Light up the Night, community celebration featuring music, children's activities, food and beverages and the Christmas Tree Lighting visit <https://www.lightupthenightpg.com/> for the complete schedule.
- Dec. 1 and Dec. 2, Punta Gorda Garden Club hosts the Holly Day Home Town Tour in the Historic District visit <https://pggc.writing.io/posts/2023-holly-days> to learn more.

Lot Mowing Program

- The current lot mowing, trimming, and edging cycle is currently underway and is scheduled to be done Sept. 26.
The following lots are completed at this time:

- 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 Corner** – Urban Design staff attended a workshop on community resilience, hosted by the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center of the University of Hawai'i. The goal of the course was to increase awareness of the meaningful actions that communities can take to enhance resilience to natural hazards and opportunities to incorporate resilience into professional practice. "Resilience" is the ability of communities to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events. Staff learned how to characterize natural hazards and identify the components of community resilience. They learned about the benefits of building resilience in all community systems and how to implement community resilience concepts and practices. Additionally, they learned about FEMA processes that help assess the risks posed by different hazards and what kind of state and federal funding is available for risk mitigation projects.



Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Channel Marker Replacements** – Construction has started for the channel marker replacement project which consists of replacing 26 channel markers within the inlet areas. Boaters are asked to use caution when navigating the inlet areas.
- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews filled depressions at 16 locations and manufactured 50 seawall panels. Crews also took sonar readings within Bass, Snook and Ponce inlet.
- **Dockside Dredging** – Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list will not be allowed to have dockside dredging performed adjacent to the seawall until the seawall has been repaired. Any dredging along the damaged seawall may cause damage.
- **Stabilizing Erosion** – Just a friendly reminder for property owners to regularly check the condition of their tarps or plastic that is protecting the eroded areas. Tarps and plastic tend to become brittle in the sun and may start falling apart. Our area is still experiencing rain events and plastic will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.
- **Canal Maintenance Seawall Failure Update** – Construction schedules have been updated and are posted on the Canal Maintenance website for the next six-month look ahead. There are 18 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with seven projects completed, and six projects under construction with one completed in Burnt Store Isles.
- **Establishing sod after seawall replacement** – Placing the sod is the final phase of seawall replacement construction. As per the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for establishing the sod after it has been placed and the City will not reimburse the owners for their water usage.
- **Vessel Speeds** – Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits.

The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlet are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.

- **FEMA Update** – FEMA inspector(s) are continuing to visit the sites with damaged seawalls. The SE zone is the last area for inspections and that work is expected to be completed within the next two weeks.
- **Dock Match Program** – The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has created a program that connects boat owners who need a temporary relocation of their boats with owners that have available dock space. This information can be found at [Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](http://PuntaGordaBoatersAlliance.com) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed the swales on North Plum Tree, Scarlet Sage, Panarea Dr., Madrid Blvd, Tripoli, South Crete Ct., Narranja, W. Ann/Lemon St., W. McKenzie/Lemon St. E. Virginia, Rum Cay Ct, La Mancha Ct., Bayshore Ct. They will be watering the sod on E. Virginia, Rum Cay Ct. and La Mancha Ct., and Bayshore Ct. for the next 30 days. They have excavated approximately 57,925 SF of material and re-sodded all areas with sod. The contractor is now working on Casey Key / Bal Harbor and will be excavating approximately 6400 SF of material and re-sodding these areas at the proper elevations. Once Casey Key / Bal Harbor is completed the next location will be on La Costa Island Ct.
- **Ponce de Leon** – The contractor has been installing the frame work to keep the wire mesh in place to the posts on the East/West side of the boardwalk. They have also been securing all the decking down to the cross members on both East/West side of the boardwalk. The contractor plans to start working on re-surfacing the bridge soon. Please take extra caution while driving through the park due to construction personal and equipment.
- **Fiber Optic Internet Network** – The fiber optic internet provider HyperFiber has been issued permits for a portion of the construction project to install a citywide fiber optic internet network within the city right of ways. Their construction continues in "bird section" of the City. This citywide project will be under construction during the next 6 months as they install the network citywide. They are currently working in the areas of the "bird section" and along Aqui Esta Drive, highlighted in red below. The blue areas are where installation will be taking place as the project progresses.



Initially you will see utility markings within the City right of way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right of way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been completed for the entire sector, crews will then return to

individual locations for the restoration of sod. This will take place at the end of construction in each sector. Please be patient and allow time for the restoration. The City engineering department will be performing spot inspections during construction as well as a final inspection when the restoration is complete to ensure the contractor's restoration meets the City's requirements. HyperFiber has provided a telephone number to call if citizens have questions or concerns about the project and installation. Please contact HyperFiber's Scott Jackson at (239) 887-5379. Please use extra caution while driving through the project area due to construction personnel and equipment.

Right of Way

- **Sign Replacement** – Crews continue to work on the replacement of signs damaged during Hurricane Ian. A total of 16 signs were recently replaced in the Suzi St area.
- **Speed Bump** – Crews are repairing the speed bump on W. Marion Ave, right before the Vasco Elmo Peoples Bridge.

Sanitation

- **Regular Yard Waste** – Just a friendly reminder that regular yard waste is collected once per week and must be out to the curb by 6 a.m. on the day of collection to guarantee pickup. Palm fronds, limbs, etc. shall not exceed 4" in diameter or 4' in length. These items must be tied and bundled for collection; bundles shall weigh no more than 35 pounds. Shrubbery, grass clippings and leaves must be placed at the curb in containers. Containers shall not exceed 32 gallons in size or 35 pounds in weight and must have handles. The regular yard waste crews are unable to pick up large loose piles and the clamshell truck will be required.
- **Yard Waste Pile Special Collection Guidelines** – As a friendly reminder, vacant lots, undeveloped properties, tree removal, lot clearing and oversized piles are NOT included in the regular yard waste service provided by the City. If you have a large quantity of loose yard waste, branches, etc. that is a wheelbarrow full or larger, you will need to schedule a special collection by calling (941) 575-5050 or [Schedule a Special Pick Up | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us).

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.

Open Positions

- **Police Officer Testing** – We are currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. We will be holding a virtual testing process in Nov. Applications must be received by Nov. 3. The written exam will be completed online anytime between Nov. 10, and Nov. 17 with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on Dec. 4. We are accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.

- **Public Safety Dispatcher 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 Public Safety Dispatcher. We will be holding a testing process in Dec. Applications must be received by Dec. 1. The exam will be held on the morning of Dec. 7, beginning at 9 a.m.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring Semester of 2024. 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!

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.

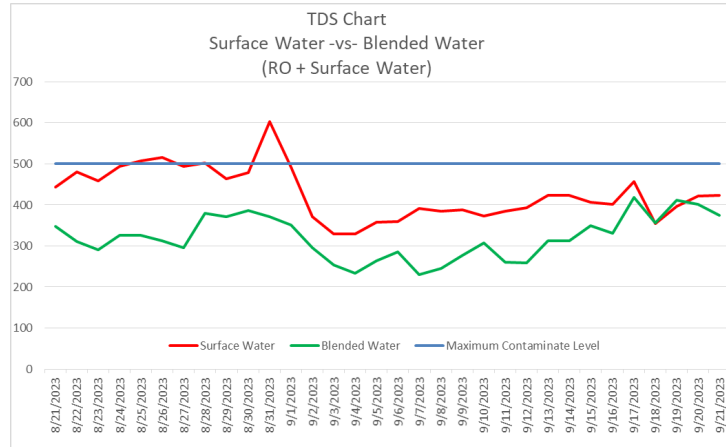
Fire

- **Residential Structure Fire** – On Sept. 18, the fire department responded to a residential structure fire in the Burnt Store Meadows area. E-2 arrived on scene and noted heavy smoke and fire coming from the exterior of the structure with fire going into the attic eaves. Units on scene included; E-2, E-3, T-52, BC-1, C-1, C-2, Assistant Fire Marshall, CCFEMS E-5, CCFEMS R-5 and CCFEMS E-7. Crews were able to knock the fire down quickly and stop any further spread or threat to exposures. Smoke filled the attic space and had to be ventilated. No one was hurt and best of all, the fire department was able to save Marc, the family cat that was trapped inside the smoke filled home. Crews applied an oxygen mask and the cat was safely turned over to its owners. Great job to everyone involved!



Utilities

- **R.O. Plant**



Administration

- **Leaks** – If you notice a water or sewer leak outside of normal business hours please call the after-hours number (941) 575-5070 or the Water Treatment Plant at (941) 639-2057.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 53.1 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.6 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 800 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 900 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Sept. 2022 29.90" Sept. 2023 1.13"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 10 –Total hardness 120 ppm
- TDS Sept. 21 – Current 375 ppm. Low 21 ppm, High 432 ppm. 13 year average 301 ppm.
- Reservoir Sept. 21 – Current 5.41', Record Low 5.04', Record High, 6.53' 58 Year Average 5.60'

City Clerk

- **Current Board and Committee Vacancies**
If you are interested in serving on a board or committee, please visit our online portal to complete an online application at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/boards-committees>.
 - **Code Enforcement Board** – (one regular) Meets the 4th Wed. at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.
 - **Donation Review Committee** – (one arts representative) 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.

- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (one regular and two alternates) Meets the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three 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.