

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

FEB. 23, 2024

City Manager

- The Fiscal Years 2024-2028 Long Range Financial Plan (LRFP) was presented at the last City Council meeting. It includes multi-year fiscal forecasts for the city's major fund groups. In addition, the plan discusses an examination of current policies for enhanced efficiencies, any changes proposed to financial policies, and budget issues or items currently known for the upcoming budget year. The LRFP works in tandem with the current strategic planning process that results in a current-year management plan and also strategically on a longer-term vision for the upcoming needs of the city. The report and ensuing conversation initiate the development of the FY 2025 annual budget. The city will present several updates and conversations over the coming months to develop a financial plan for final approval in September 2024. The following is a recap of some of the information shared during the City Council meeting.



Revenue assumptions reflect no change in the millage rate of 3.9500 and a 5% increase in property tax revenue. Other revenues are estimated at 1-2% increases. The city proforma plans for planned funding to enhance personnel service levels through FY 2026. And the build-up and use of capital outlay reserves in the five-year plan from the city's annual funding policy. The LRFP includes six firefighters and four police officers and is projected to be funded by grant revenues.

The city also plans for expenditures. Personnel expenditures are estimated (City-wide) to increase by 4% for merit, pensions by 5%, health insurance by 6%, and workers' compensation by 10%. We also estimate increases of liability insurance by 5% and all others by 3%, except for election expenses of \$46,350 per year and scheduled planning studies. Capital Outlay is projected at \$892,000 annual funding per 5-year capital outlay plan. Transfers include the Drainage Program at \$300,000 per year. The Paving Program is budgeted at \$709,000 per year. Capital Projects are budgeted per schedule, plus funding for infrastructure needs or other considerations.

The CRA is scheduled to sunset this fiscal year. Revenue assumptions include the final TIF revenue in FY 2024. Herald Court Center (HCC) lease revenue is down due to city use of prior Florida Gulf Coast University. The city will need those units through FY 2025 and project one unit vacancy FY 2026-2028. The expenses also include other leases and loan repayments per contracts. Expenditures include early repayment of debt in FY 2024, operating expenditures feature estimated increases of 3%, HCC facilities maintenance is at an average of \$138,500 annually, and Laishley Park amenities expenses are budgeted at \$60,000-\$70,000 annually.

Sanitation fund revenues are estimated to increase by 6% per month in the annual rate for recycling. Estimated \$1.00 per month yearly rate increase for refuse/yard waste. They estimated 0.5% growth in single and multi-family revenues. The LTFP includes financing of packers in FY 2027 & FY 2028. Expenses such as recycling cost increases are estimated at 6% per monthly unit rate or \$4.20 per gallon on diesel fuel. Capital outlays include equipment replacement per five-year plan and require debt service beginning in FY 2027.

Additionally, issues such as legislative proposals, additional homestead exemptions, hurricane Ian recovery, inflation, and scarcity of resources may impact budget numbers. Employee attraction and retention continue to be a priority in FY2025, as well as planning for contract negotiations.

The LRFP is the kick-off of the FY2025 Budget process. Continued conversations will occur at upcoming City Council meetings, and the city welcomes comments regarding the budget and strategic plan. Comments can be made in person at City Council meetings on the first and third Wednesday of every month at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum or via email to citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Council** – City Council met on Feb. 21st at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. Items of interest included:
 - Approval of an alley vacation in the area of City Hall and the City Hall Annex
 - Fiscal Year 2024-2028 Long Range Financial Plan overview
 - Update on the Urban Garden at 217 East Virginia

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/>.
- Feb. 22 – 24, Florida Frontier Days, Punta Gorda History Park. For additional information, contact (941) 769-1270.
- Feb. 23 – 25, Blue Ribbon Events Arts and Craft Show, Gilchrist Park. For additional information, visit <https://daniellesblueribbonevents.com/>
- Mar. 2, Twins Tot 5K Run/Walk. For additional information, visit [Twins Tot Walk/Run 5K \(runsignup.com\)](https://twinstot.com/)
- Mar. 2, Rally round for Prevention Pickleball Rally with Guns and Hoses Match email questions to volunteer@drugfreec.org.
- Mar. 3, Punta Gorda Rotary Taste of Punta Gorda and Beyond. For additional information, visit <https://tasteofpuntagorda.org/>
- Mar. 9-10, Sullivan Street Craft Fair. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>

Lot Mowing Program

- The City started a new mowing, trimming and edging cycle on Feb. 20.

Urban Design

- **Planning Corner** – The Planning Division has moved. It is still in Towles Plaza, however, it is now located in unit 217. Certificate of Appropriateness applications can be dropped off in this new office. The Zoning and Code Compliance Divisions will remain in Towles Plaza, 2705 Tamiami Trail, unit 113. The office is open to members of the public applying for a garage/estate/yard-sale permit, general parking permit, recreational vehicle parking permit, watercraft parking permit, moving vehicle (portable on-demand storage) permit, dumpster permit, right-of-way parking permit, business event permit, grand opening event permit, or temporary promotional event permit. Park rental and event applications and fees may be dropped off at this location. The public may also come to this office to submit code compliance complaints, and sign up for lot mowing services.



Agendas for the Historic Preservation Advisory Board, Planning Commission, Code Enforcement Board, Development Review Committee, and Board of Zoning Appeals will also be available for pick up in unit 113. The office is open Mon. through Fri. from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Public Works

- **Administration Citizen's Academy** – Finance hosted their session of 2024 Citizens' Academy. Participants were provided with an overview of the Finance division. Departmental managers of Procurement along with Billing and Collections provided information surrounding their department's processes.

Canal Maintenance

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews manufactured 80 seawall panels and f and recovered navigational hazards at two locations. Depressions were filled and the annual seawall assessment continues.
- **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 months look ahead. There are 26 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 28 projects completed, and five projects under construction with 10 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.
- **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.

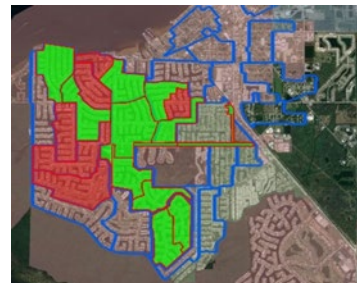
Engineering

- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has begun to excavate Don Quixote Dr. and will be excavating approximately 4,200 SF and installing new sod at the proper elevation. They have excavated approximately 32,000 SF this fiscal year. The next street to be excavated will be Brazilia Ct.
- **ADA Interior Signage and Wayfindings** – The contractor has begun to install the ADA signs at the Fire Stations II and III, and at the Cooper St Recreation Center.
- **Splash Pad** – Construction/demolition continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. Excavation and helical pile installation have taken place in preparation for the support beam and sheet pile shoring that will allow safe excavation to install the 4000-gallon underground tank. Please use extra caution while driving or walking through the park due to construction personnel and equipment. To the highest extent possible the restroom facilities will remain open to the public. The access to the restrooms will be from



the marina side of the building. There will be periodic temporary sidewalk closures immediately adjacent to the construction area as required for public safety. The construction area will be closed to the public at all times during this period. The enhanced fountain area is scheduled to reopen in May 2024.

- **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. This project will be under construction during the next several months as they install the network citywide. They are currently working in the areas highlighted in red below. The green areas are where the work is completed and their permit has been inspected for final by the engineering department. Additional areas are scheduled to be final in the next several weeks. The blue areas are where the 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 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

- **Update** – The sidewalk near the corner of Marion Ave and Maude St has been completed. The Bal Harbor Blvd/Bal Harbor Ct., drainage project and paving has been completed. The roadway on Luna Ct has been completed. Crews are working on repairing a catch basin at the end of Coldeway Dr. Crews are continuing to rebuild the catch basin on Luna Ct. and filling potholes throughout the City.

Sanitation

- **Commercial Trash Guidelines** – Please follow the guidelines listed below to ensure proper service. The property owner is responsible for the removal of any items related to construction or remodeling.
 - Do not block the dumpster or dumpster enclosure with vehicles or trash.
 - Maintain a five-foot clearance all the way around the dumpster free of trash and debris at all times.
 - All trash must be placed properly inside trash bags and the trash bags placed inside the dumpster.
 - Do not place loose trash or trash bags on the dumpster enclosure floor. The property owner is responsible for keeping the area clean. City staff is responsible for emptying the dumpster only.
 - Construction debris and hazardous waste are strictly prohibited from being placed inside the dumpster.



Police

- **School Job Fairs** – Punta Gorda Police Department Professional Standards Specialist Kaylee Adikes and Employee Development Coordinator Glen Ritta attended both Charlotte High School and Florida Gulf Coast University Job Fairs last week. They got to talk to students about a career in law enforcement and hand out some cool PGPD promotional items.



Open Positions

- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. A virtual testing process will take place in April. Applications must be received by Mar. 29. The written exam will be completed online between Apr. 5, and Apr. 12, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on Apr. 23. The department is accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department will be conducting new hire testing continually to be prepared for future openings. Currently, the department is accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held on the morning of Mar. 14, beginning at 9 a.m. Applications must be received by Mar. 1.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer 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 more information, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.**

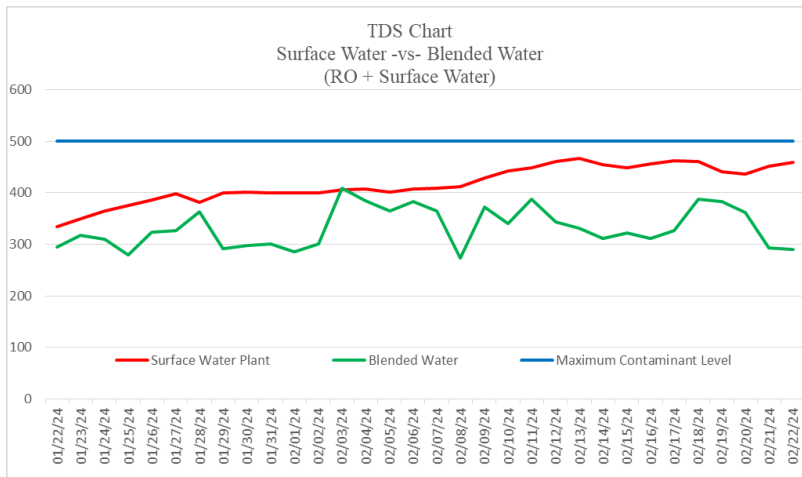
Fire

- **Service Award** – This week we recognized Battalion Chief Jarrett Lombard for completing 20 years of service with the City of Punta Gorda Fire Department. We also recognized Firefighter Xaiver Finerty for completing one year of service and graduating from our New Hire Proficiency Training Program. Congratulations to both of them for their achievements and dedication to our department.



Utilities

- **R.O. + Surface Water**



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 Plan at (941) 639-2057.
- **Service Award** – Chris Hall Maintenance Chief has earned his 5 Year Service Award

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 45.3 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.5 MG daily average.
- **Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect** – Receiving 700 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 700 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- **Rainfall** – Feb. 2023 0.00" Feb. 2024 3.36"
- **Hardness** – Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 8 –Total hardness 144 ppm
- **TDS** – Feb. 22 Current 290 ppm. Low 280 ppm. High 669 ppm. 13 year average 451 ppm.
- **Reservoir** – Feb. 22 Current 5.28", Record Low 4.93", Record High, 6.02" 58 Year Average 5.20"



City Clerk

- **2024 Election Cycle** – The seats for Districts 1, 2, and 4 are scheduled for election this year. A general election will take place on Nov. 5, if there are two candidates for one district. A primary election will take place on Aug. 20, if we have three or more candidates for one district. The two candidates receiving the most votes would proceed on to the general election.
 - Candidate packets are now available for the 2024 election cycle. The packet can be viewed on the [City's website](#). Bound copies are available to interested parties who make an appointment with the City Clerk's Office to review the materials contained in the packet and to complete an acknowledgement of their receipt.
 - Filed candidates will be listed on the website upon submission of Form DS-DE 9.

- **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://puntagorda.granicus.com/boards/forms/650/apply/>.

- **Building Board** (1 contractor and 1 consumer advocate) – Meets the fourth Tuesday at 9 a.m. in Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Reviews enforcement of all codes related to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.
- **Code Enforcement Board** (1 regular and 2 alternate) – Meets the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. in Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Financial disclosure required. Hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.
- **Donation Review Committee** (1 arts representative and 1 historic non-profit representative) – Meets at 10 a.m. in City Council Chambers on the 4th Thursday of January, April, July and October, or as needed, immediately following the meeting of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board. Charged with review of all non-monetary gift donation proposals/letters of intent received by the City, in accordance with the review process and established criteria identified in the Non-Monetary Donation Policy. Makes recommendations to the City Council for the acceptance or rejection of non-monetary gift donations.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** (1 regular and 2 alternate) – Meets the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms - maximum of three terms OR partial term plus 2 more terms. Identifies for the 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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (1 regular) Meets the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Seven-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard 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:

- Coastal Isles Wine Bar, 1133 Bal Harbor Boulevard, Unit 1135
- Jackson Hewitt Tax Service, 5001 Taylor Road
- Simplifi Home Loans, 425 Cross Street, Unit 116
- Sinkunas & Company, 334 West Olympia Avenue
- Fluccuzio Vacation Rental, 120 Donna Court