

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT
MARCH 22, 2024

City Manager

- We are thrilled to announce that the City of Punta Gorda has been honored with the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFAO) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its outstanding budget. This prestigious award signifies a remarkable achievement by the city, reflecting the unwavering dedication of its governing body and staff to uphold the highest standards of governmental budgeting. To earn this esteemed recognition, the city had to meet nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation, demonstrating excellence in four crucial areas. The focus areas are the budget as a policy document, financial plan, and operations guide and communications device. Notably, the budget documents submitted by the City of Punta Gorda excelled in all four categories, meeting the rigorous standards set forth by GFOA.

The city also received important special recognitions. The recognitions are for the long-range operating financial plans, the budget process, and the capital program. To receive these special awards, all the reviewers had to give a perfect score. For major projects, the city uses a five-year capital budget. This helps recognize when significant cash infusions will be necessary. These infusions may come from debt issuance, grants, new revenue sources, impact fees, and/or a build-up of fund balance. Any or all of these methods may be utilized. Not as obvious, but just as important, is the increase in services with the costs associated with these services requested by the citizens or mandated by external forces. Economic forecasts are performed during the year to avoid surprises due to service changes. Reviewers found the multi-year financial projections and explanations of assumptions to be outstanding.

The budget process for the city is an ongoing cycle. The budget process consists of activities encompassing developing, implementing, and evaluating a plan to provide services and capital assets. The budget process helps decision-makers make informed choices about providing services and capital assets and promotes stakeholder participation in the process. City Council meeting public comments, comment forms on the city's website, and direct emails are all taken into consideration during the budget process. Reviewers found the budget process to have a full and clear explanation that was enhanced with a detailed calendar.

The capital program for the city is the framework that outlines the city's proposed investments in infrastructure, facilities, and other long-term projects. The investments aim to improve or expand public assets and services to meet the community's needs. Overall, the capital program provides a roadmap for allocating resources and managing investments to maximize benefits for the city and its residents while ensuring responsible fiscal management. Reviewers found the capital program outstanding with comprehensive community and operating budget impact.



I want to thank our elected officials and city staff for their efforts, which have resulted in receiving the GFAO Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. I look forward to the continued discussions throughout the FY2025 budget process. Resident input is critical to budget development; please email your suggestions to citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com. All budget comments will be compiled and shared with the City Council. **Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.**

Human Resources

- **Safe Boating Community** - With over one million recreational vessels registered in Florida, millions of people are enjoying time on and in the water.
 - Life jackets are at the core of safe boating, whether using a motorized or non-motorized vessel. Good swimmers still need life jackets. When people fall off a boat, they may become disoriented, injured or unconscious. Life jackets can keep victims' heads above water so they can breathe and be rescued more easily. Every child should wear a life jacket at all times when boating
 - Check that your equipment is in good working order; get a free vessel safety check with your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadron
 - Review a pre-departure checklist to ensure you have everything you need in your boat, including a tool kit and first-aid kit
 - Before you leave, always file a float plan with someone you trust
 - Dress properly and bring an extra set of clothes in case you get wet
 - Don't forget the sunscreen and know the signs of heat illnesses
 - Respect your limits and keep within your limits to avoid injury
 - Don't drink and drive a boat; alcohol affects judgment, vision, balance and coordination
 - Once on the water, use common sense; in a split second, a situation can arise or the weather can turn
 - If you notice storm clouds, a sudden temperature drop or wind speed increasing, play it safe and get off the water
- **Open Positions** – The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and a defined contribution retirement plan with matching contributions.
A Crew Chief position in the Utilities Department is available. This entry level supervisory position is responsible for the construction, maintenance, and repair of water distribution facilities and systems. The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available learn more at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/.../employment>.



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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](http://www.visualartcenter.org)
- Mar. 22 – 24, End of Season Arts and Craft Show, Gilchrist Park. For additional information, visit <https://mypromotions.showapplications.com/>
- Mar. 23, TEAM Punta Gorda Pedal and Play in Paradise. For additional information, visit <https://teampuntagorda.org/pedal-and-play-in-paradise-2/>
- Mar. 26, Punta Gorda Garden Club's 2024 Flower Show. To be presented at the Isles Yacht Club, 1780 W. Marion Ave, Punta Gorda, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The show titled "Name That Tune" will take inspiration from the rich heritage of American popular song. For information please visit [Punta Gorda Garden Club, Inc. - Writing.io \(pggc.org\)](http://www.puntagordagardenclub.com) or call Betsy Foster, (941) 661-9733
- Mar. 31, New Life Church Easter Sunday Family Event, Gilchrist Park. For additional information, visit <https://newlifeforall.church/events/easter-at-gilchrist-park/>

Lot Mowing Program

- The mowing cycle is complete. The City will begin a new mowing cycle on Mar. 25.
- **Planning Corner** – The Urban Design Department, including Planning and Capital Projects, Zoning and Code Compliance, and Building Division presented their session of the City's Citizens Academy on Mar. 19. The speakers were Lisa Hannon, Planning Director; Brittany Metzler, Planner I; Jessica Leatherman, Zoning Official; Mitchell Austin, Urban Design Manager; Kathleen Croteau, Building Official; and Danielle Berhel, Sr. Project Manager. Citizen Academy participants provided a plethora of outstanding questions leading to so much great discussion that the session went an hour over our allotted time! Staff really enjoyed the interaction with the public and the opportunity to talk about what we do here at the City. Urban Design is always available to assist the public with any questions you may have via email at: urbandesign@cityofpuntagordafl.com.



Public Works

Administration

- Urban Design hosted this week's session of the Citizens' Academy this week. Urban Design had a very informative discussion about the City-Wide Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Capital Improvement Projects. The Building Department explained the building permit process, inspections, contractor licensing, and the origin of building codes. Code Compliance explained the importance of the department within the City organization. The presentation covered due process, violation notices, common code violations, and the lot mowing program.

Canal Maintenance

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews filled 35 depressions within PGI and BSI. Crews continue to manufacture seawall panels to complete the seawall damages caused by Hurricane Ian.
- **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 27 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 53 projects completed, and six projects under construction

with 14 completed in Burnt Store Isles. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us)

- **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 \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](https://boat2puntagorda.org) click on the Dock Match button for information.

Engineering

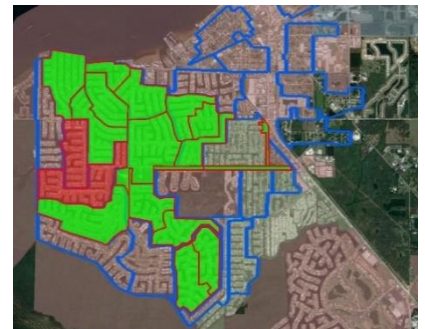
- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed Don Quixote Dr., Brazilia Ct, Darin Dr, and Padre Island Dr. They will be watering the sod for the next 30 days weather permitting. The contractor has begun excavating Casey Key Dr. and will be excavating approximately 3,100 SF. Once the contractor gets the new grades established they will be installing new sod at the proper elevation. They have excavated approximately 44,200 SF this fiscal year. The next street to be excavated will be Ussepa Ct.

- **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. The new 4,000 gallon tank plumbing is underway. The demolition of the existing splash pad surface has been completed in preparation for



resurfacing. 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 for 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 late 2024. **If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 am. – 4:30 pm.**

- **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

- **Updates** – Crews are working on improving the walkway between Marion Ave (Business District) and Harold Ct. Sidewalk repairs continue around the city. The catch basins along Cooper St., near the High School are being rebuilt. Vactor work continues around the city. Crews are removing stumps along Vasco St.

Sanitation

- **Bagged Garbage** – All loose trash must be placed inside a bag before placing the items inside the trash container. This will prevent any wind-blown litter during the collection process, or any leaking from wet garbage. It also helps keep animals out of your garbage. As a reminder, please bag any pet waste and pet hair securely inside a bag to prevent debris from blowing onto the sanitation workers.
 - **Sec. 10- 8. Disposition, lids on containers.** - All garbage should be deposited daily in the cans or containers herein above required. Garbage cans and containers shall be kept tightly covered at all times except when it is necessary to lift the cover to deposit garbage or trash in the garbage can or container. Before being placed into a can or container, garbage, and trash shall first be enclosed in a plastic or paper bag, cardboard box, or another container sufficient to inhibit any liquids from leaking. No garbage or trash shall be stored outside a residence or for non-residential use except in an appropriate can or container. No garbage, trash, yard waste, or recyclables shall be buried in the City. No garbage or trash shall be placed in containers to extend above the top edge of the container sides. Yard waste no more than three (3) inches in diameter or four (4) feet in length shall either be disposed of pursuant to subsections (b) through (e) of section 10-1.3 or be placed in yard waste cans or containers.
 - **Trash, recycling, and yard waste must be placed curbside by 6 am on the day of collection** Our sanitation workers strive to maintain a routine in which residents would be serviced roughly around the same time each collection day. However, sanitation encounters problems from time to time such as trucks being down for service, staffing issues, or weather conditions. To maintain the best level of service, we kindly ask residents to have trash, yard waste, and recycling curbside either the night before or before 6 am on the day of service. Staff is not always available to return the same day to collect a late put-out during these instances. Thank you for your continued cooperation. For more information regarding solid waste [Chapter 10 SOLID WASTE, YARD WASTE, PUBLIC NUISANCES* \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#)



Police

- **PGI Marine Watch** – The Punta Gorda Isles Marine Watch Program is an all-volunteer group of residents who are committed to helping keep our canals free of crime. The Marine Watch volunteers provide “Watch & Report” surveillance (they do not intercede) to both the Punta Gorda Police Department and the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office. The members use their own boats and volunteer for a two-hour watch every month. While they are not directly associated with the Punta Gorda Police Department’s Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program, the police department is these volunteers providing extra eyes and ears on city waterways.



still very thankful for

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 Apr. 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 continually conduct new hire testing to prepare 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 May 16, beginning at 9 a.m. Applications must be received by May 3.
- **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.**

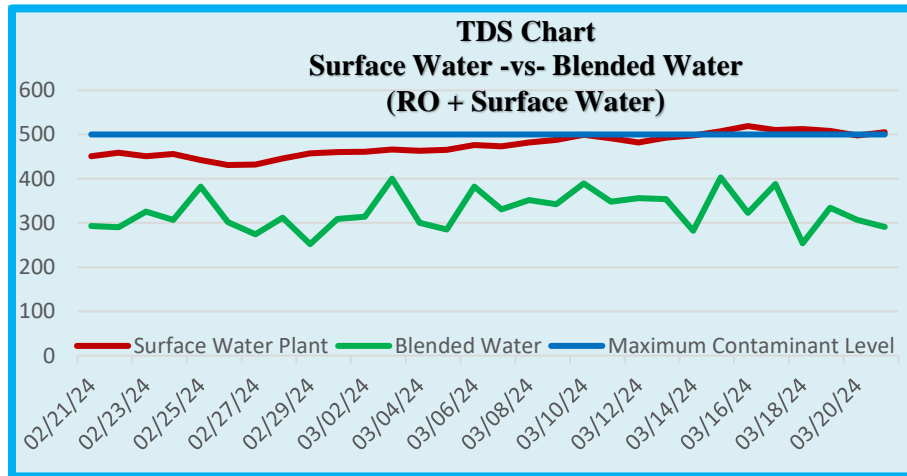
Fire

- **In-House Training Completed** - Another busy week in the fire department as our three new hires complete their three weeks of in-house training before being released for shift work this weekend. They participated in many department-wide training classes, public service assists, zone familiarization, ride-along with on-duty crews, and even helped out with several hands-only CPR, AED, and Stop the Bleed classes throughout our community. It was exciting to see them hit the ground running and prepare for the start of a long career in the fire service. We would also like to recognize Firefighter Marc Boyden for completing our one-year new-hire proficiency program. Congratulations to Marc for his hard work and dedication to our department.



Utilities

- **RO + 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 Plant at (941) 639-2057.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 52.6 MG delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with a 7.5 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 Mar. 2023 0.48" Mar. 2024 – 1.30"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 8 –Total hardness 154 ppm
- TDS Mar. 21 – Current 291 ppm. Low 291 ppm, High 650 ppm. 13 year average 468 ppm.
- Reservoir Mar. 21 – Current 5.11', Record Low 4.88', Record High, 6.51' 58 Year Average 5.23'

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, 2, 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 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. Did you know your signature can change over the years? Ensure the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections has an up-to-date record of your signature on file for the upcoming election. Stop by their office at 226 Taylor Street, Punta Gorda, Florida, 33982, to update yours during regular business hours. In order to vote by mail, you must have a valid request on file with the Supervisor of Elections Office. Requests for vote-by-mail ballots can be made in person, by calling (941)833-5400, or by visiting the [Supervisor of Elections website](#)

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** (one contractor and one 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 two 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.

- **Burnt Store Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – (one regular) Meets the second 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 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 two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.
- **Donation Review Committee (one historic non-profit representative)** – Meets at 10 a.m. in City Council Chambers on the fourth Thursday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., 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** (one regular and two 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 two 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.
- **Punta Gorda Housing Authority** – (two regular) Meets the third Thursday at 8:30 a.m. in the Punta Gorda Housing Authority Community Room, 340 Gulf Breeze Avenue. Must be resident of Charlotte County or the City of North Port. Five-member board. At least one Commissioner shall reside within the Housing Authority’s jurisdiction and receive rent subsidy through a program administered by the Authority. Seven-member board. Four-year terms – no term limits. The mission of the Housing Authority is to provide quality, affordable housing that is well maintained and free from drugs, violent crime, and discrimination while serving residents with the highest degree of professional courtesy, empathy and respect.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – (three 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:
 - Howdy Honey Boutique, 211 West Olympia Avenue
 - Millenium Lab, 150 West McKenzie Street, Units 114 and 115
 - Punta Gorda Hair LLC, 214 Wood Street
 - Shorepoint Medical Group, 713 West Marion Avenue
 - Storage Sense, 150 Rio Villa Drive