

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT
MARCH 29, 2024

City Manager

- Annually, alongside budget development, the City of Punta develops a strategic plan to guide city resources toward our vision of preserving our small-town charm while fostering diversity, economic growth, and sustainability. Informed by resident input, the City Council has outlined five strategic priorities: financial/economic sustainability, infrastructure sustainability, partnership communication and collaboration, and strategic communications positioning that includes quality of life.

Ensuring long-term financial/economic sustainability is paramount for our community's prosperity. This entails delivering valued public services efficiently to enhance residents' economic well-being, achievable only when recurring revenue and expenses align. The city identifies sustainable spending policies and appropriate technologies to support business operations through operational audits and investments in new technology that connect the city with the community. Projects that increase

efficiencies, such as digital plans review, public records request software, implementing paperless automated processing of invoices, and utilizing technology in the codification of ordinances, all benefit the users of city services.

Infrastructure sustainability is the maintenance and enhancement of the city's capital assets and municipal services. With 14 public buildings, 121 miles of streets, 2886 street lights, four bridges, 110 miles of seawall, 237 miles of water mains, 129 miles of sanitary sewer, storage tanks, master pumping station, booster pumping facility, 119 lift stations, 23 parks totaling 130 acres, nine miles of pathways, 208 pieces of equipment and an extensive technological infrastructure, there is a lot to maintain and enhance. Projects in this area range from quality of place investments to vital public health and safety investments.

Partnership and collaboration opportunities have been integral to the city's strategic planning priorities for some time and embody how the organization delivers services to the community. While a city government doesn't necessarily have to provide all services, it should be a catalyst for action. In this vein, the city works with numerous public, private, and non-profit agencies that offer various recreational, cultural, educational, administrative, and operational services to the community. This includes housing projects, beautification projects, state agency interaction, and the Citizen's Academy.

Strategic communications positioning and marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying stakeholder requirements, and in so doing, it facilitates the achievement of the organization's objectives. This is done in collaboration with various non-profit organizations, civic associations, homeowners associations, and promotional partners. Projects include marketing of the city, implementing communication tools for resident engagement, creating maps and brochures, and sharing critical messages for public safety.



As we progress through the 2025 fiscal year strategic planning process, we welcome input and ideas from residents by emailing citymgr@cityofpuntaordafl.com and during public comment at the City Council meetings, held the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. *For further inquiries, contact City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntaordafl.com or call the main office at (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Council** – City Council will meet on Apr. 3 at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. Items of interest include:
 - Award of Amendment #10 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operating Permit Renewal to CDM Smith of Fort Myers, FL
 - All-American City Finalist



- **Home Rule Hero Award** – The Florida League of Cities (FLC), the united voice for Florida’s municipal governments, recently recognized Punta Gorda Mayor, Lynne R. Matthews with a 2024 Home Rule Hero Award for their hard work and advocacy efforts during the 2024 Legislative Session. Matthews worked tirelessly throughout session to promote local voices making local choices, protect the Home Rule powers of Florida’s municipalities and advance the League’s legislative agenda.

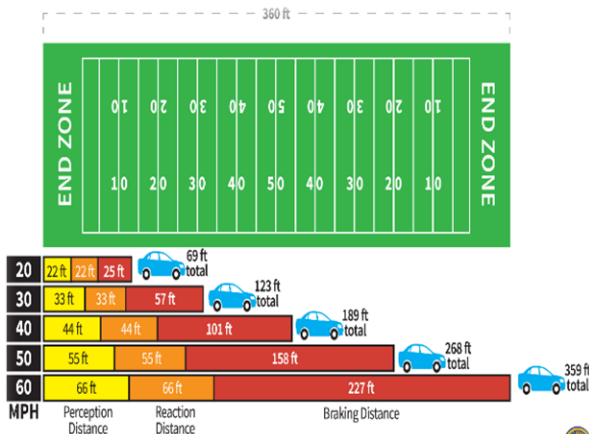


Human Resources

- **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 Maintenance Worker I position in the – Right of Way, Public Works Department is available. This entry level position is responsible for laboring tasks and a wide variety of road construction maintenance operations work. The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available learn more at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/.../employment>.
- **What is Distracted Driving** - Distracted driving is anything that takes your hands off the wheel, your eyes off the road or mind off driving. It is extremely risky behavior that puts everyone on the road in danger. There are different kinds of driver distractions: visual, manual, and cognitive.

Texting requires all three types of distraction, making it one of the most dangerous of distracted driving behaviors. However, this is not the only cause of distracted driving. Other common distractions include:

- Tending to kids or passengers,
- Eating,
- Watching an event outside of the vehicle,
- Interacting with passengers,
- Unsecured pets,
- Putting on makeup or grooming,
- Adjusting radio or climate controls,
- Checking your GPS app.
- Daydreaming.



To successfully avoid a crash, a driver must perceive a hazard, react and give the vehicle time to stop. Driver perception distance, or the distance a vehicle travels from the time a driver sees a hazard until the brain recognizes it, and reaction distance, the distance a car will continue to travel after seeing a hazard until the driver physically hits the brakes, dramatically affects a vehicle's stopping distance. Even a focused driver going 50 mph will travel nearly the length of a football field before coming to a complete stop.

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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- Mar. 31, New Life Church Easter Sunday Family Event, Gilchrist Park. For additional information, visit <https://newlifeforall.church/events/easter-at-gilchrist-park/>
- Apr. 6, Farm to Tables, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, For additional information contact info@bgcofcc.org



Lot Mowing Program

- The lot mowing cycle is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed Apr 2.
- **Planning Corner** – As a friendly reminder, unless otherwise provided for in the Sign Code or as approved with a Special Event permit, signs within the public right-of-way, public property, public easements, or structures, including, but not limited to, medians, roundabouts, sidewalks, utility poles and cabinets, streetlight poles, utility/planting strips, traffic control devices/support poles, and street trees are prohibited. Feather/Flutter flags/signs are also prohibited. Signs found to be in violation will be removed by City staff.



Public Works

Canal Maintenance

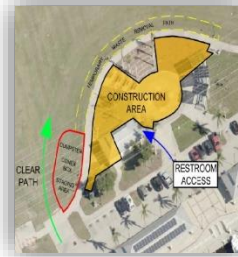
- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews filled depressions at 14 locations and manufactured 64 seawalls. Crews are also preparing to Sonar several canals for depth confirmation. Crews continue to manufacture seawall panels to complete the seawall damages caused by Hurricane Ian.
- **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 28 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 58 projects completed, and six projects under construction with 15 completed in Burnt Store Isles. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.cityofpuntaorda.com/canal-maintenance/seawall-failures)
- **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., Padre Island Dr., and Casey Key Dr. They will be watering the sod for the next 30 days weather permitting. The contractor has begun excavating Ussepa Ct. and will be excavating approximately 5,000 SF. Once the contractor gets the new grades established they will be installing new sod at the proper elevation. They have excavated approximately 50,000 SF this fiscal year. The next street to be excavated will be Casey Key Dr. Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. The underground plumbing has been completed, backfilled, and has passed inspection. The Pebble-Tec surface went down on the splash pad this week. 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.
- **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.

Facilities

- Nature Park: The 17' X 8' Pressure-treated decking on the footbridge that spans the water runoff from one section to the other is being refurbished. The boards are old and warped causing a trip hazard. Work on the bridge is starting today and will finished on Apr. 2. The railings will be tightened up and weather-treated to keep with the nostalgic and natural look of the Nature Park.

Parks and Grounds

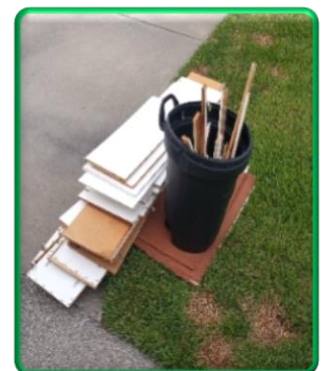
- The Ponce Fountain at Gilchrist Park is now operational. The fountain will be shut off next week for a few days to clean and refurbish the interior finish and will then be brought back online. The refinishing was unable to be done before the repairs and installation of the pumps/motors. Parks and Grounds is sorry for any interruption in your park experience.

Right of Way

- Crews are working on replacing the catch basin on Cooper St, across from Sally Jones School.
- Vactor work continues around the city.
- Continuing to patch potholes throughout the city.
- Crews secured the fencing on the Harborwalk near Hurricane Charley's.

Sanitation

- **Trash, recycling, and yard waste must be placed curbside by 6 a.m. 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 a.m. 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* \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#)
- **Construction Debris** – Do NOT place construction debris inside the trash cart or by the curb. This includes placing the debris in a manner in which the debris is concealed by adding trash bags on top. Construction debris is a prohibited item and city crews will not collect the construction debris. Disposal of the material should be arranged by the contractor or the homeowner doing the work. Construction debris includes, but is not limited to; roofing material, glass, brick, concrete, wood and lumber, steel, asphalt, pipe, drywall, etc. It also includes, tree remains or vegetative matter which results from land clearing or land development operations for a construction project. Homeowners are encouraged to dispose of the debris at the Mid-County Mini Transfer & Recycling Facility.



- **Mid-County Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facility** - Residents are allowed 12 free visits per fiscal year (Sept. 30 - Oct. 1). Recycling and household hazardous waste do not count towards the 12 visits. Proof of county residency is required. Residents need to bring a valid form of identification to include name, photo, and local address. Photo identification from other areas must be accompanied by a current utility bill or document showing proof of residency at a Charlotte County residential address. P.O. Box addresses are not accepted as proof of residency. [Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facilities | Charlotte County, FL \(charlottecountyfl.gov\)](https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/mini-transfer-recycling-facilities)

Police

- **Twenty-Five Year Service Award** – This week at the Police Department Leadership Meeting Chief Pam Smith presented Lieutenant Chris Salsman with an award for his twenty-five years of service. Congratulations Lieutenant Salsman and thank you for your service to the city.
- **Emerald Lakes Police, Fire, and EMS Appreciation Day** – Lt. Woelk and Officers Russell, Bowling, Waldrop, and Nowak got to spend some time with residents of Emerald Lakes this week at their Police, Fire, and EMS Appreciation Day. The residents provided meals and showed their support for these public servants.
- **Gulfview RV Park K9 Donation** – Officer Jessie Richards and K9 Sasha accepted a generous donation to the Punta Gorda Police Department K9 Fund from the residents of Gulfview RV Park this week.



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 May 24. The written exam will be completed online between May 31, and June 7, and virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on June 18. 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.*

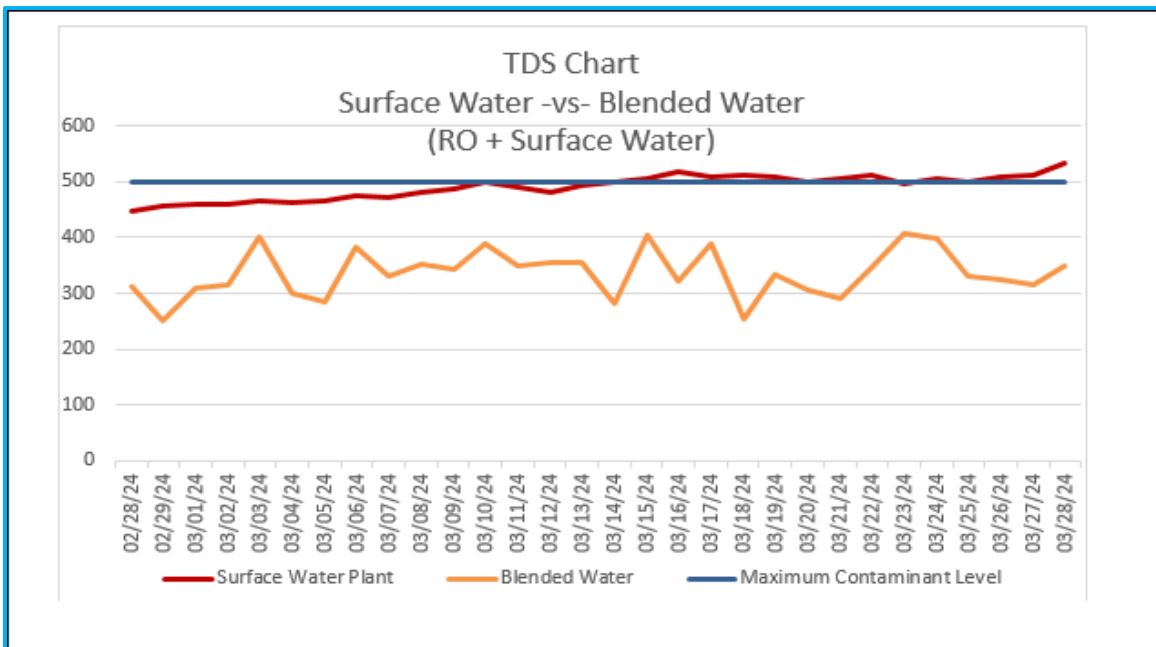
Fire

- **Emerald Lake First Responder Appreciation Day** - The fire department would like to recognize and thank the residents of Emerald Lake Mobile Home Park for hosting a First Responder Appreciation Day on Mar. 26. The residents hosted a breakfast and lunch for all first responders to show their appreciation for the emergency services provided in our community. Members were able to drive through and grab a meal to go and meet with several of the residents. The first responders were able to speak with residents about the services we provide as well as programs including public educational opportunities put on by the fire department. Thank you for the recognition Emerald Lake Community!
- **Fire Extinguisher Demo** - The City of Punta Gorda Fire Department assisted the Charlotte County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in evaluating the skills of each team member in the basic use of fire extinguishers. Each member received hands-on training and was able to successfully extinguish live fire. The Charlotte County Community Emergency Response Team educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area. We were happy to help out such a great organization!



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

- 48.4 MG delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with a 6.9 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 700 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).

- Rainfall Mar. 2023 0.48" Mar. 2024 – 1.52"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 9 – Total hardness 160 ppm
- TDS Mar. 28 – Current 350 ppm. Low 295 ppm, High 671 ppm. 13 year average 484 ppm.
- Reservoir Mar. 28 – Current 5.09', Record Low 4.87', Record High, 6.70' 58 Year Average 5.21'

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 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](#).

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://puntagorda.granicus.com/boards/forms/650/apply/>.
- **Building Board** (one contractor and one consumer advocate) – Meets the fourth Tues. 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 Tues. 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 Wed. 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 Thurs. 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 Thurs. 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 Thurs. 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 Mon. 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:
 - Desoto ABA Services Corp, 223 Taylor Street, Unit 127
 - Harbor Home Builders Model Home, 2418 Magdalena Drive
 - North Port Deck and Fence, 3941 Tamiami Trail, P.O. Box 2039
 - Ocean Breeze A/C Services Inc, 201 West Marion Avenue, Unit 1214
 - Punta Gorda Self Storage, 1086 Cooper Street
 - South Styles, 2511 Vasco Street, Unit 113
 - Staci Cokers Hair Studio, 2511 Vasco Street, Unit 113