

## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

April 26, 2024

### City Manager



- Citizen advisory boards and committees, appointed by the City Council, play a vital role in Punta Gorda's governance. Members of these groups bring expertise and passion for their respective areas, ensuring the achievement of specific advisory goals. Currently, several of these boards and committees are in search of dedicated volunteers to join their ranks.

The Building Board is seeking one consumer advocate member and one alternate member. The board meets on the fourth Tues, at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. It is a seven-member board with two alternate members. Members serve three-year terms with a maximum of three or partial terms plus two more terms. Reviews enforcement of all codes related to construction standards and acts as a condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. The board hears alleged complaints against contractors.

Code Enforcement Board is seeking one alternate. This board meets on the fourth Wed. at 9 a.m. in The Military Heritage Museum. This is a seven-member board with two alternate members. Members serve three-year terms with a maximum of three terms or partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure is required. The board hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.

The Donation Review Committee is seeking one historic non-profit representative. The committee meets at 10 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum on the fourth Thurs. of Jan., Apr., July, and Oct., or as needed, immediately following the Historic Preservation Advisory Board meeting. The committee is charged with reviewing 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 accepting or rejecting non-monetary gift donations.

Historic Preservation Advisory Board seeks two regular and two alternate members. The group meets on the fourth Thurs. at 9 a.m. in the Military Heritage Museum. Seven-member board with two alternate members. The term limit is three years with a maximum of three or partial terms plus two more terms. Identifies historically significant structures and sites for the Council 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. Make recommendations for 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. The board promotes public awareness of historic archaeological preservation and its community benefits.

Utility Advisory Board has two regular seats available. The board meets the fourth Mon. at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. It is a seven-member board allowing for three-year terms with a maximum of three terms. The board makes recommendations to the City Council concerning revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies, and review of utility drawings and specifications.

If you have an interest in serving in any of the available seats, please fill out the online application at <https://puntagorda.granicus.com/boards/forms/650/apply/> or give the Punta Gorda City Clerk's Office a call at (941) 575-3369. Together, we will continue to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development, and sustainability. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at [citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com) or by calling the office line at (941) 575-3302.*

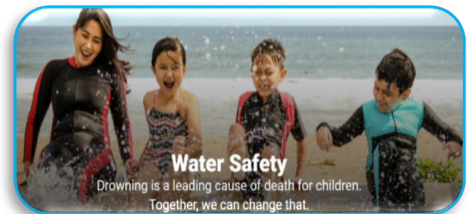
- **Punta Gorda Hotel** – Pre-application meeting for demolition permit took place at 1:30 p.m. on Wed. 120 days to completion of demolition when demolition permit is issued. Owner is taking additional action to further secure the fence. The Harborwalk is open.
- **City Council** – City Council will meet on May 1 at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. The following are a few items that will be discussed:
  - Cooper Street Recreation Center Lease Workshop Dates
  - A.C. Freeman House Building Stabilization - 90 Percent Budget Estimate

## 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. Currently hiring for a professional position in the Utilities Department for Maintenance Worker I – Wastewater Collection. A skilled laborer position responsible for the construction, maintenance, and repair of wastewater collection 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>.



- **Why Is Water Safety So Important?** - It only takes a moment. A child or weak swimmer can drown in the time it takes to reply to a text, check a fishing line or apply sunscreen. Death and injury from drownings happen every day in home pools and hot tubs, at the beach or in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams, bathtubs, and even buckets. Take these sensible precautions when you're around water (even if you're not planning to swim):
  - Know your limitations, including physical fitness, medical conditions.
  - Never swim alone; swim with lifeguards and/or water watchers present.
  - Wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket appropriate for your weight and size and the water activity. Always wear a life jacket while boating, regardless of swimming skill.
  - Swim sober.
  - Understand the dangers of hyperventilation and hypoxic blackout.
  - Know how to call for help.
  - Understand and adjust for the unique risks of the water environment you are in, such as:
    - ❖ River currents, ocean rip currents, water temperature, and shallow or unclear water.
  - Underwater hazards, such as vegetation and animals.
  - Learn how to perform these 5 skills in every type of water environment that you may encounter (such as in home pools, oceans, lakes, rivers and streams):
    - ❖ Enter water that's over your head, then return to the surface.
    - ❖ Float or tread water for at least 1 minute.
    - ❖ Turnover and turn around in the water.
    - ❖ Swim at least 25 yards.
    - ❖ Exit the water.



Follow the links below for more information: [Water Safety for Kids - YMCA Find a Red Cross Swim Lesson Provider](#) | [American Red Cross](#)

## Urban Design

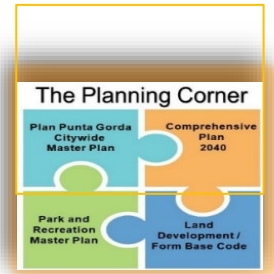
### Upcoming Events

- 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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- Apr 27, Strongman Competition, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, for more information contact [rhinostrengthfl@gmail.com](mailto:rhinostrengthfl@gmail.com)
- May 3-5, Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, for more information contact [teresadesguin@yahoo.com](mailto:teresadesguin@yahoo.com)
- May 5, PG Half Marathon, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St, for more information contact [drew@eliteevents.org](mailto:drew@eliteevents.org)

## Lot Mowing Program

- The City will begin a new mowing cycle on Apr. 30.
- **Planning Corner** – On Apr. 22, City staff attended the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center’s (CHEC) vertical oyster garden (VOG) installation at Laishley Marina. City staff learned how simple it is to install these habitat-providing, water-cleaning stacks of dried oyster shells from a dock or pier. For more information on VOGs - and how to hang one from your dock – please visit: [CHEC presents - How to install a Vertical Oyster Garden \(VOG\) \(youtube.com\)](#)
- **Arbor Day** - In celebration of Arbor Day, City staff attended the Historic Punta Gorda Civic Association’s (HPGCA) tree planting ceremony in Linear Park. Four trees were planted with a grant that was applied for through the Forest Service by the HPGCA Board, in cooperation with the City. These trees are replacing four trees that were lost during Hurricane Ian along the Linear Path, between McGregor and Berry St. For more information, please visit: [Tree Canopy & Irrigation Project — HPGCA](#)



## Public Works Administration

- The Citizens Academy completed its 2024 sessions. This year’s sessions hosted 16 attendees. Attendees were provided with certificates of completion at the Apr. 17, City Council Meeting. City employees provide attendees with an overview of their Department functions across the city. The academy is a great way for citizens of the city to gain a better understanding of each department. Our employees take pride in their work and enjoy educating citizens regarding their specific roles. If interested in attending enrollment for the 2025 sessions begins on Oct 1. Information regarding the academy may be found on the city's website. [Citizens Academy | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](#)

## Canal Maintenance

- Canal Maintenance Production – Crews filled depressions at two locations and fabricated 74 seawall panels due to Hurricane Ian. Also removed three navigable items from the canals.
- 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. Utilizing plastic during a rain event 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 44 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 69 projects completed, and 19 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.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., Padre Island Dr., and Casey Key Dr. (SW), which have been finalized and turned over to the homeowner. The contractor will be watering the sod for the next 30 days weather permitting at Ussepa Ct., Casey Key Dr. (SE) and Turtle Dove Cir. They have excavated approximately 60,000 SF this fiscal year. The contractor has begun excavating Sea Horse Ct. and will be excavating approximately 3,000 SF. Once the contractor gets the new grades established they will be installing new sod at the proper elevation. The next street to be excavated will be Sea Fan Dr.
- **Laishley Park** – Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. Shade structure foundations were installed this week along with wall foundations. Most underground work has been completed, and preparation is taking place for the surface improvements. 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 installation will be taking place as the project progresses.

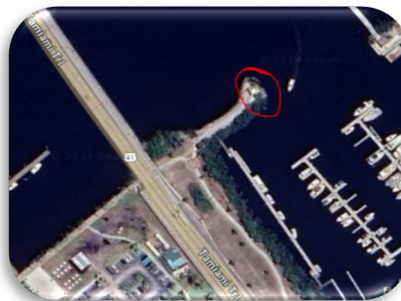


Initially, you will see utility markings within the city right of way, followed by the directional drilling of the fiber optic conduit. Fiber optic boxes will be installed in the right of way or easement at the edge of your property. Once the installation of the underground and service points has been 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 on 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

- Vactor stormwater cleaning work continues around the city.
- Parking restriction signs are posted at the entrance of Laishley Park. Crews have completed repairing brickwork in the area of Taylor and Olympia.
- Continuing to patch potholes throughout the city.
- Work continues on the renovation project at the Pavilion located East of US 41 continues. Crews continue to construct the rip rap wall to ensure the area is stable. The anticipation completion date is May 3. Please use caution in this area.



### Sanitation

- **Did you know?** You may schedule a collection of a yard waste pile, appliance, electronics, motor oil, or batteries using the "Schedule a Special Pick Up form. The form is located on the Sanitation home page of the City website - [Schedule a Special Pick Up | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/schedule-a-special-pick-up) or by calling 941-575-5050, from 8 am – 4: 30 pm.
- **Recycling – Reduce Contamination** – Homeowners should only place the following materials in their recycling carts – Newspapers, magazines, office paper (no shredded paper), brown paper bags, paperboard cartons, dairy and juice containers, junk mail, phone books, flattened cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic containers number 1-7, glass bottles/jars and tin or steel cans.
- **Plastic bags** – Do not place the following into recycling carts: liquids foods, waste, fabric, wood, hoses, corda and Styrofoam.
- **Reduce Contamination info** [How to recycle correctly - Reviewed \(usatoday.com\)](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/05/02/how-to-recycle-correctly/1025000001/)

## Police

- **Employee Recognition** – Chief Pamela Smith had the opportunity to recognize multiple employees and volunteers Wednesday afternoon for their service to the city. Awards were given for Employee of the First Quarter, Exceptional Duty, Volunteer of the First Quarter, and Five Years of Volunteer Service. The volunteer awards came at a fitting time, as this week is National Volunteer Week.

- PFC. Christopher Nunziato and OFC. Vincent Matteini were both named Employee of the First Quarter 2024.
- An Exceptional Duty Award was presented to Lt. Christopher Salsman.
- Al Valdez was awarded the Volunteer of the First Quarter 2024.
- Five-year Volunteer Service Awards were given to Marilyn Kaye-Kibbey, Stuart McMeans, Anthony Demarco, Ara Aprahamian, and, Duane Ising.



## **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](http://www.pgpdjobs.com) or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at [employeedevelopment@pgorda.us](mailto:employeedevelopment@pgorda.us).*

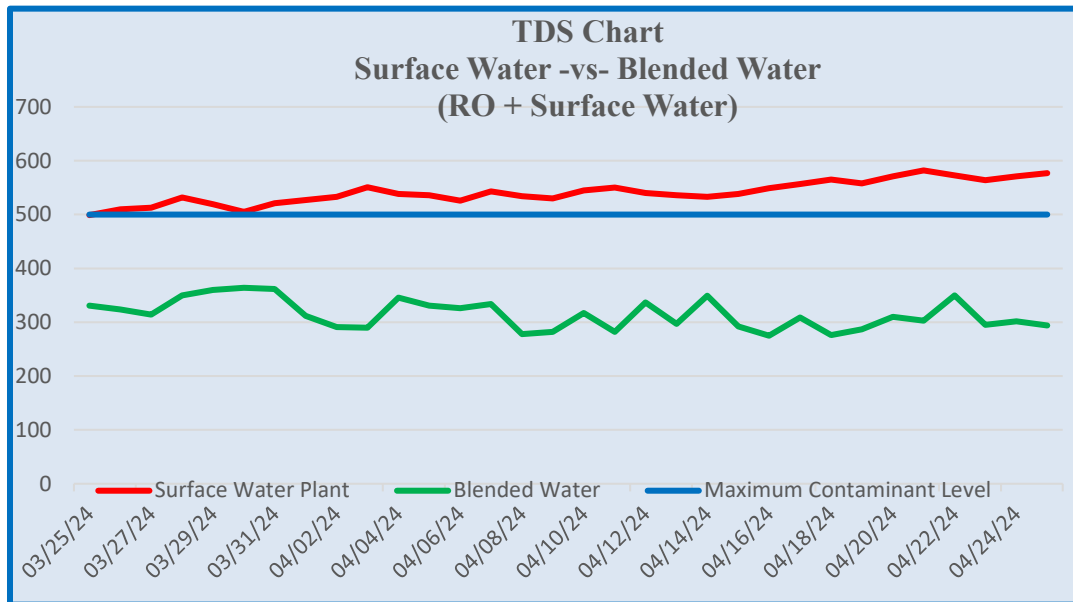
## Fire

- **EMS Documentation Training** – The fire department has been working on EMS documentation training. Every call out firefighters respond to whether it be for a fire, medical emergency or even a public service assistance call, a report number is generated. These reports are used to document events of the call, track statistics on call types and equipment used. This helps the fire department track trends and build trainings based on current events here within the city.
- **Fire Training** – Lieutenant Alex Davenport and Firefighter/EMT Xavier Finnerty spent some time training alongside one of our volunteer firefighters this week. The crews spent time discussing pumping operations and water supply connections. We love seeing our crews out sharpening their skills and passing them along to the next generation!



## 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

- 56.5 MG delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with a 8.1 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 1350 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 700 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Apr. 2023 3.36" Apr. 2024 – 0.72"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 8 –Total hardness 128 ppm
- TDS Apr. 18 – Current 294 ppm. Low 294 ppm, High 588 ppm. 14 year average 470 ppm.
- Reservoir Apr. 18 – Current 5.02', Record Low 4.74', Record High, 5.82' 58 Year Average 5.14'

## 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](#).

### 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 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.
- **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.
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- **Utility Advisory Board** – (two 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.



#### How did you become involved with volunteering on a City Board?

There was an opening in the BSI Canal Advisory Committee, and I figured my experiences as an engineer with a lifelong career in and around heavy industrial construction projects would fit well with this opening, so I applied.

#### What have you enjoyed about your experience as a board member?

Expanding my understanding of Florida and Punta Gorda styles, policies and rules and regulations. Hopefully, one of my undertakings was moving the lock widening project forward towards fruition.

#### What would you say to others considering applying to serve on a board?

Positive attitudes go a lot farther towards getting things done. Also understand the confines which the City employees are compelled to work within - i.e., budgets.

Interested in serving on a City board? [Apply on our website.](#)



- **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:

- Lulu's Donuts, 221 Wood Street
- Howell Wealth Advisors, 2705 Tamiami Trail