

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

June 21, 2024

City Manager

- The City of Punta Gorda continues to stand out as an exceptional location for aspiring entrepreneurs looking to establish small businesses. Business owners benefit from robust networking opportunities, ready access to financial capital, and the capacity to attract skilled personnel critical for sustainable operations. Additionally, the region's appeal as a natural paradise, devoid of income, inheritance, or estate taxes, further enhances its allure. These pivotal factors and, a stable customer base and a supportive local government consistently attract business owners to our vibrant community.

Residents reap substantial rewards from engaging with local small businesses, which frequently prioritize delivering personalized customer service. Stepping into a neighborhood shop or dining at a nearby establishment often means encountering familiar faces genuinely invested in ensuring a positive customer experience. These interactions foster a profound sense of connection and community, elevating transactions beyond mere commerce to meaningful relationships. Small business proprietors often exceed expectations by offering tailored recommendations, sharing personal anecdotes, and cultivating enduring customer loyalty. Through steadfast support of small businesses, individuals contribute to fostering a sense of belonging and nurturing an environment where customer satisfaction becomes synonymous with authentic connections.

The impactful presence of small businesses extends beyond individual transactions, enriching our neighborhoods with distinct character and charm. These enterprises specialize in offering products and services uniquely tailored to local tastes and preferences, whether through quaint bookstores, specialized boutiques, niche salons, or beloved family-operated eateries. By patronizing these establishments, community members actively participate in preserving and celebrating the distinctive identity of our town, ensuring that each interaction becomes a part of our collective narrative.

Punta Gorda proudly hosts over 1000 active business licensees within its city limits, underscoring its dynamic commercial landscape. To amplify the visibility of its business community, the City of Punta Gorda champions the "Promote Punta Gorda" initiative, a dedicated platform showcasing the diverse array of businesses integral to Florida's cherished Harborside Hometown. This program not only spotlights local entrepreneurs and their offerings but also underscores the manifold benefits of supporting nearby businesses. Eligible small business owners within Punta Gorda have the opportunity to feature prominently on the city's influential social media channels and in its widely circulated



Weekly Highlights Report. To learn more about participating in this initiative, interested parties are encouraged to visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/promote-punta-gorda-business-spotlight> or contact (941) 575-3394.

Further setting Punta Gorda apart is its exclusive offering of the Design Studio, a distinctive resource enabling prospective business owners to engage with Urban Design staff in a pre-application capacity. This invaluable meeting guides applicants in assessing whether their proposed developments align with stringent Land Development Regulations, ensuring compliance before formal submission. The upcoming Design Studio session is scheduled for June 27, running from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., providing essential guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs seeking to shape the future of our community.

Small businesses serve as crucial drivers of our local economy, generating employment opportunities, nurturing community pride, and cultivating a distinctive sense of place. Through collaborative partnerships, the City of Punta Gorda fulfills its mission to preserve and enhance Punta Gorda's identity as a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history, and as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or the main office phone line (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Council** – City Council will meet on July 3, at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum.
- **Herald Court Center** – The elevator in Herald Court Center has been repaired and is now open to the public.

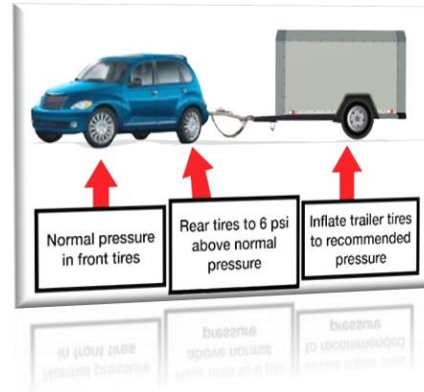
Human Resources

- **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 the following professional position:
 - **Utility Engineer – Utilities.** A professional position responsible for Utilities Engineering and providing technical engineering services for City utilities construction and improvement projects.
 - **Utilities Maintenance Worker III – Water Treatment Plant.** A skilled laborer position responsible for maintenance and repair of water treatment plant equipment and systems. Perform plumbing repairs, construction and maintenance of treatment facilities and grounds.
 - **Senior Accountant – Finance** – A professional position responsible for applying the principles of accounting to analyze financial information and prepare financial reports by compiling information, preparing profit and loss statements, and utilizing appropriate accounting control procedures.
 - **Maintenance Worker II – Canal Maintenance – Public Works** – A skilled laborer position responsible for the maintenance and repair or replacement of seawalls and related structures within the P.G.I. and B.S.I. canal maintenance districts.
 - **Maintenance Worker III – Facilities Maintenance – Public Works** – A skilled laborer under limited supervision, performs a variety of skilled work in the care, maintenance, and repair of City Properties and other facilities. Performs preventative building maintenance, routine plumbing and electrical repairs.



The City of Punta Gorda has a variety of employment opportunities available learn more at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/.../employment.com>

- **Trailer Safety** – Towing a trailer is no small responsibility and should be gone about with great care and with a safety-minded attitude. The following steps will help ensure your towing safely:
 - Proper hitching of the trailer is important to ensuring a safe and smooth towing experience.
 - A properly loaded trailer is easier to control. Weight distribution, both front-to-back and side-to-side is vital as is cargo securement.
 - It is important to understand the importance of adequate brakes, properly inflated and rated tires, crossed safety chains, and working lights in order to tow safely.
 - Regular trailer maintenance is critical to ensuring the longevity of your trailer, as well as making sure you are able to tow to your destination safely.
 - The driver is responsible for selecting the right tow vehicle and trailer for the load, hitching the unit, loading, steering, speed, and braking.
- **Benefits** – City Council approved an additional option for general employees with City Defined Benefit Pension Plans. Current employees will receive information about participation in available plans in the coming weeks. All new hires will also be required to join the new plan. The plan was on the agenda for the General Employee Pension Board regular meeting. Board legal counsel and actuarial consultant were present to provide information and answer any questions.



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.charlottecounty-chamber.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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)
- [June 29, Freedom Festival, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit Street, for more information contact \[jerrycleffi001@gmail.com\]\(mailto:jerrycleffi001@gmail.com\)](#)

- [July 4, Independence Day Celebration, Fishermen's Village, 1200 W Retta Esplanade, for more information contact \[kburnam@fishermensvillage.com\]\(mailto:kburnam@fishermensvillage.com\)](#)
- [July 13, Queens of Today, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit Street, for more information contact \[queensoftoday01@gmail.com\]\(mailto:queensoftoday01@gmail.com\)](#)



- **The Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Poker Walk** – The Chamber of Commerce is extending an invitation for your business to join in for next month's Poker Walk happening on July 18. The Poker Walk on July 18 promises to be another fantastic opportunity for downtown businesses to showcase their offerings while supporting a worthy cause. We already have commitments from esteemed establishments such as Pomegranate & Fig, Illusions, and PG Chocolate and Wine, and we're now seeking an additional five businesses to complete the lineup.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- July 18, between 4 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- Drive businesses to the downtown area and support the Peace River Wildlife Center, our chosen Non-Profit recipient for July;
- Guests will tour participating businesses, make purchases, and contribute donations;
- Each guest will draw a card from a card deck provided by the chamber at each location, aiming to assemble the best poker hand.

One location will serve as a wild card stop, allowing participants to exchange one card for a redraw. The evening will culminate in a final gathering (*location TBD*) at 7:30 p.m. to determine the Poker Walk winners.

This is an excellent opportunity for your business to engage with the community, attract potential customers, and contribute to a meaningful cause. Thank you for considering this opportunity to be a part of our vibrant downtown community and support a valuable cause *If you're interested in participating or would like more information, please email brett@illusionsofpg.com or call 941-505-5777 (office) or 941-626-3560 (cell).*

- **Lot Mowing Program** – The lot mowing cycle is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed on June 25, weather permitting.



- **Planning Corner** – The Building Division is excited to announce a new inspection scheduling line for our community contractors and related parties going live June 26. This system is designed to improve customer service by providing 24/7 access to scheduling/rescheduling/canceling building inspections and obtaining inspection results. Follow these instructions:
 - Be sure to have the permit number, inspection code, and your desired date for inspection ready
 - Dial (941)575-3327
 - Select Option from Menu
 - Follow the prompts to schedule



Public Works

- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Crews filled depressions at 20 locations. Crews manufactured 36 seawall panels.
- **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 18 projects in Punta Gorda Isles under construction with 93 projects completed, and six projects under construction with 21 completed in Burnt Store Isles. [Hurricane Ian Related Seawall Failures | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://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 \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](http://boat2puntagorda.org) click on the Dock Match button for information.

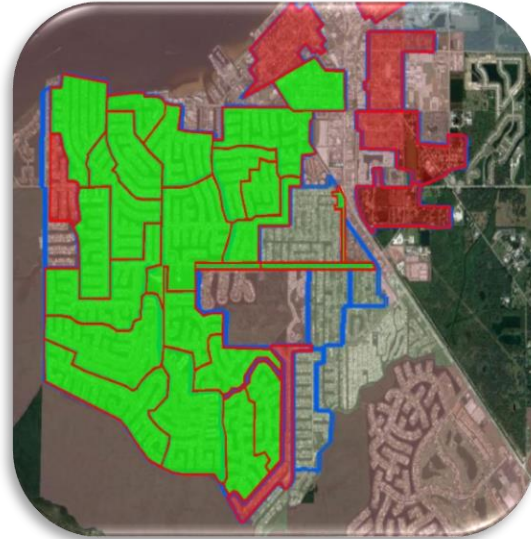
Engineering

- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed Don Quixote Dr., Brazilia Ct., Darin Dr., Padre Island Dr., Casey Key Dr. (SW), Ussepa Ct., Casey Key Dr. (SE) Turtle Dove Cir 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 Sea Horse Ct., Sea Fan Dr., and Grebe Dr. The contractor has begun to excavate Orange St., W. McKenzie St., Lemon St., and McGregor St. this week, and will be excavating approximately 12,000 SF. Once they have the grades established, new sod will be installed. The swale contractor has excavated approximately 73,000 SF this fiscal year.
- **City Hall Annex** - The contractor has begun the interior work on the third floor where the Urban Design, Code Enforcement, and Zoning offices were. The contractor has removed a few walls and doors in the same area, to give the office space a more open concept. The walls in common spaces, bathrooms, conference rooms, and offices have started to get a fresh coat of paint on them. The contractor plans to begin installing the ceiling tiles this week throughout the third floor and to start the new flooring next week.
- **Laishley Splash Pad** - Construction continues at the Interactive Fountain area in Laishley Park. This work includes rehabilitation and upgrades to the splash pad/play area. The pump and water treatment equipment skid have been placed within the screen wall area. Plumbing connections and low voltage control wiring are near completion. 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 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.

Right of Way

- Crews will be completing a drainage project on Shreve St and Marion Ave.
- The brickwork located near MLK between Virginia Ave and Olympia Ave has been completed.
- Crews assisted with the installation of high mast lighting at the following locations; Airport Rd and 41 N, McKenzie, and 41 N, 41 S in front of Pinch a Penny.
- Mowing has begun along the Railroad ditches.
- Crews are working on McKenzie clearing drainage pipes with the Vactor Truck from 41 S to W. Charlotte Ave.

Sanitation

- **Appliances & White Goods** - White goods are washing machines, refrigerators, stoves, dryers, water heaters, and similar appliances. The appliances cannot be taken to the County Landfill along with any other household trash. These items are collected by the clamshell truck and transferred to a recycling facility. The City handles the collection of these items each week on Fridays. Residents must request a special pick-up at least 24 hours before the collection date by calling the Public Works Department (941) 575-5050 or completing the online web request <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation>.

- **Electronic Device Recycling Services** - Residents will be allowed to place discarded electronics curbside for collection and proper disposal. These include, but are not limited to: microwaves, computers, monitors, printers, TVs, VCRs, and DVD players. They will be collected on Fridays by Waste Management. Residents must request a special pick-up at least 24 hours before the collection date by calling the Public Works Department (941) 575-5050 or completing the online web request <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation>.
- **Moving Boxes** - The cardboard boxes must be emptied of all debris (plastic and Styrofoam are not allowed). The boxes must be broken down, flattened, and stacked roughly four feet from the recycling container. Residents must request a special pick-up at least 24 hours before the collection date by calling the Public Works Department (941) 575-5050 or completing the online web request <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation>.
- **New Residents** – Welcome new residents! Please visit our website to view collection days, schedule special pick-up, and review the Residential Solid Waste Collection Guide, which contains a summary of the guidelines [Sanitation | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/sanitation) New construction properties can contact Public Works to schedule trash and recycling containers (941)575-5050.

Police

- **Reunification Exercise** - On Wednesday, the Punta Gorda Police Department participated in a reunification exercise with city, county, and school employees at the Harold Avenue Recreation Center in Port Charlotte. The drill was designed to practice keeping children safe and reuniting them with their families in an emergency at one of the schools.
- **VIP Program** - The Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program contributed 725 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during May 2024. Our volunteers are vital to this police department, and we appreciate them greatly! Community members interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing vip@pgorda.us.



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 July 12. The written exam will be completed online between July 19, and July 26, and

virtual oral board exams will be conducted via Zoom on Aug. 6. The department is accepting applications from certified and non-certified candidates.

- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The police department continually conducts 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 virtually between July 12, and July 19. Applications must be received by July 5.
- **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

- **Annual City Staff Hurricane Training** – This week Fire Chief Holden Gibbs hosted the annual city staff hurricane training. Several groups rotated through the Events Center to hear this year’s storm predictions, preparation plans and to get insight on tier levels and response expectations for post storm recovery operations. The Fire Chief acts as the City’s Emergency Manager during a declared State of Emergency.
- **Incident Command Training** – This week Lieutenant Jim Klages led all fire department crews through an ICS training. Lieutenant Klages recently attended and ICS school in Orlando. He was passionate about bringing back what he learned to our department so that all members could better manage large and chaotic scenes to include fires and mass casualty incidents (MCI).

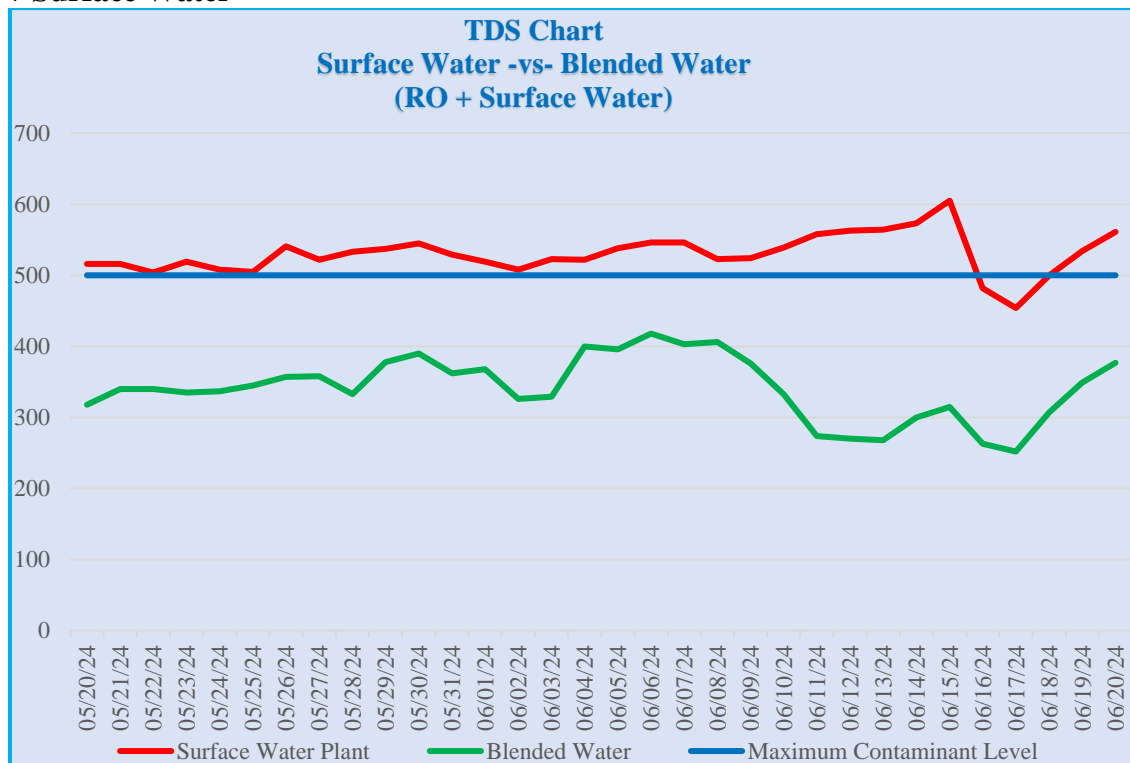


- Reunification Exercise** – Members of both the fire department and police department attended a reunification drill to be better prepared in the event of an active assailant situation. This was a county wide exercise where several members of many different agencies participated and worked to identify specific needs and obstacles following the events of an active assailant situation.



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**
- 33.6 MG** delivered to the distribution system during the last seven days with **4.8 MG** daily average.
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 400 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 400 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).

- Rainfall June 2023 – 5.55” June 2024 – 6.21”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 10 –Total hardness 176 ppm
- TDS June 20 – Current 377 ppm. Low – 264 ppm, High 531 ppm, 14-year average 405 ppm.
- Reservoir June 20 – Current 5.32', Record Low 4.30', Record High, 6.90' 58 Year Average 5.42'

Lawn Watering

- **Phase I Water Shortage** – The Southwest Florida Water Management District's (District) Governing Board declared a [Phase I Water Shortage](#) for the District's central and southern regions, which include Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. The primary purpose for a Phase I water shortage is to alert the public that watering restrictions could be forthcoming. The order also requires local utilities to review and implement procedures for enforcing year-round water conservation measures and water shortage restrictions, including reporting enforcement activity to the District. A Phase I water shortage order does not change allowable watering schedules, however it does prohibit "wasteful and unnecessary" water use. [Water Restrictions | City of Punta Gorda, FL](#)
- **Lawn Watering Schedule/Times** – Lawn watering is limited to twice per week (if needed) by property address. Before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. Hand watering and micro-irrigation of plants (other than lawns) can be done on any day and at any time using a shut-off nozzle on their hose, so water isn't wasted.



Lawn Watering Schedule Table

Addresses	Current Watering Day	May Also Water
Ending in 0 and 1	Monday	Thursday
Ending in 2 and 3	Tuesday	Friday
Ending in 4 and 5	Wednesday	Saturday
Ending in 6 and 7	Thursday	Sunday
Ending in 8 and 9	Friday	Tuesday
Addresses that end with a letter instead of a number will water on:	Friday	Tuesday

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, as two candidates qualified for each district. Qualified candidates are listed on the [City's website](#).
- 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, one contractor, and one alternate) – 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 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** (one regular and 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., April, 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 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.

- **Planning Commission** – (one regular) Meets the fourth Mon., at 2 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to amending, extending or adding to the comprehensive plan for the physical development of the City, platting or subdividing land within the City and adopting and amending a zoning ordinance.
- **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.
- **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:

 - Rich Vacation Rental, 2223 Ryan Boulevard