



MELISSA REICHERT  
City Manager

## ✦ THE WEEKLY RUNDOWN: INSIGHTS & UPDATES

Through hard work, prudent fiscal management, and sound decision-making, the City of Punta Gorda is proud to present its proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget to the community. This plan not only maintains strong and healthy reserves but also advances our strategic plan objectives, funds the essential services our residents rely on every day, and does so while reducing the millage rate to 3.8686. In short, the budget continues our commitment to providing high-quality services at a responsible cost.

The Charlotte County Property Appraiser has reported a modest yet meaningful 2.3 percent increase in taxable property values citywide. New construction, annexations, and other adjustments contributed \$12.2 million in taxable value. This figure is lower than last year's \$30.8 million, primarily due to the impacts of hurricane-related property damage.

State revenue projections present a mixed picture. The city expects a 3.6 percent decrease in its share of the 1 percent sales tax, largely due to changes in countywide population distribution, but also anticipates a 1.3 percent increase in municipal revenue sharing. Estimates for communications and gas taxes have not yet been released, and these will be carefully incorporated into the final budget once they become available. As in years past, Punta Gorda continues to budget conservatively, using 95 to 100 percent of state projections to safeguard long-term financial stability.

Maintaining adequate reserves remains one of the city's most important financial priorities. Using a comprehensive five-year forecast of planned needs and identified priorities, the city works to balance the budget responsibly while ensuring reserves never fall below the national standard of 16.7 percent. This strategy not only strengthens Punta Gorda's fiscal health but also guarantees that we remain prepared to respond effectively to hurricanes or other unexpected emergencies. In a coastal community like ours, this commitment to readiness is both practical and essential.

It is important to note that the proposed budget still ensures that infrastructure priorities are funded. In addition, the plan provides for the addition of much-needed personnel. These new positions include public safety staff to help us meet today's safety standards, reduce costly overtime, and improve the overall delivery of service, along with other essential roles identified in our long-term personnel management plan.

Priorities for the coming year include long-term infrastructure planning, growth management, updates to impact fee structures, and ongoing investments in critical systems such as streets, water, sewer, and drainage. Equally important, the city remains committed to actively pursuing grants and forging partnerships to leverage outside funding sources, easing the burden on local taxpayers while still advancing the projects that matter most.

Recent years have clearly demonstrated the importance of resilience and foresight in city government. From hurricane recovery efforts to legislative partnerships, Punta Gorda has consistently aligned its resources to address both the immediate needs of today and the sustainability of tomorrow.

As always, transparency and public engagement are at the heart of our process. Residents are warmly invited to attend the upcoming public budget hearing at 5:01 p.m. on Wednesday, September 10, in the Laishley Community Room. This is your opportunity to learn more about the proposed budget, ask questions directly, and share your valuable perspectives as the City finalizes its plan for the year ahead. By working together, we will continue to ensure Punta Gorda remains a fiscally responsible, resilient, and vibrant community for today and for generations to come.

*Dr. Missy*



**DISTRICT ONE DISTRICTWIDE ROADWATCH REPORT #35 FOR WEEK August 31- September 5, 2025** District One is twelve counties: Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee, Polk, and Sarasota Click on the link below for updates from FDOT road watch. [fdot-district-one-roadwatch.pdf](https://www.fdot.com/district-one-roadwatch)



### SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Here in SWFL, we know our most likely causes of emergencies are medical, fire, hurricanes, or flooding. So we should be prepared for those types of events, at least. Preparedness starts in our homes, and communities. There are lots of resources out there to help you plan for, and put together checklists and supply kits for just about any type of emergency. Here are some basic tips to help you be prepared.

1. Know what emergencies you are most likely to be affected by
  - This could be health, natural disaster, or vehicular based
2. Have a family emergency plan for those emergencies
  - Cover the basics of what each member of your family is going to do during an emergency
  - How are you going to communicate or where is everyone going to meet at
3. Build your emergency supply kits
  - Whether these are for inside your home, vehicles, or something you might need to carry
4. Practice your emergency plans
  - Practicing your plans will help make sure they will work for you and your family
5. Get involved in your community and local organizations that assist in emergencies
  - Whether it is your local government emergency management department, churches, shelters, or other organizations, know how you fit in to, or how you can help the larger plans



The City of Punta Gorda has implemented **Alert Punta Gorda**, an emergency public notification system. This system allows the City of Punta Gorda to contact the entire community or to target specific areas in case of an emergency or for urgent situations that require the public's immediate attention such as natural disasters (hurricane

warnings or fires), man-made disasters (chemical spills or gas leaks), search and rescue situations (missing children or endangered adults), sexual offender alerts, etc. Users can choose how they want to receive time-sensitive alerts. You can choose to receive alerts on your home or business phone, mobile phone, email, text message, or more based on your settings. Need to sign up for a new Alert Punta Gorda account and choose your alert settings? **Sign Up for Alert Punta Gorda**. Already have an account and need to make changes or update your information? Log In to Alert Punta Gorda <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/services/public-safety/alert-punta-gorda>

### Human Resources



The City of Punta Gorda offers a very generous benefit package to include medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and an employee pension plan. If you are interested in a position listed below, submit an application on the Employment Opportunities | City of Punta Gorda, FL (punta-gorda.fl.us)

- Controller, Finance
- Engineering Design Specialist
- Maintenance Worker I, Right of Way
- Sanitation Worker II, Sanitation
- Utilities Maintenance Worker I, Water Distribution
- Utilities Maintenance Worker III, Water Treatment Plant
- Utility Engineer, Utilities

### Upcoming Employment Testing

**Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** —The police department continually conducts new-hire testing to prepare for future openings. The department is currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher. The exam will be held virtually between September 12 and September 19, 2025. Applications must be received by Friday, September 5, 2025.

**Internship Program** — The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Fall 2025 semester. Our 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; therefore, we encourage potential interns to apply as soon as possible.

*To apply for employment or for 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).*

[Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St.](https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/events) 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 \(visualartcenter.org\)](#)

[Punta Gorda Historical Society Newsletter - PGHS Newsletter - August 2025](#)



## SAVE THE DATES - EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS !



September 8  
9 am  
**Pre-Agenda  
Council Meeting**  
Laisley Community

**September 20**  
12 pm - 9 pm  
Key Lime & Tropical Fest  
Fishermen's Village  
Punta Gorda, FL

**September 6**  
8 am - 1 pm  
**Farmers Market Downtown  
Punta Gorda**  
Every Saturday

**September 9**  
5 pm  
City Council Workshop-  
Utilities Rate Study and  
Code Enforcement  
Laisley Community Room

**September 20 and 21<sup>st</sup>**  
10 am - 5 pm  
Punta Gorda Chamber of  
Commerce  
Annual Sullivan  
Street Arts & Craft  
Festivals

SPONSORED BY THE CELTIC RAY  
AND THE PGI CAR CLUB  
PARK IN THE EMPTY LOT ACCROSS  
NESBIT FROM THE RAY



CELTIC RAY CAR SHOW  
2ND THURSDAY EVERY MONTH-2-  
5PM ALL MAKES AND MODELS

**September 10**  
5:30 pm - 8 pm  
SHE talks  
Workshop YMCA  
Cooper Street  
Hosted by Women  
United/United Way

**September 22**  
9 am  
Pre-Agenda  
Council Meeting  
Laisley  
Community  
Room

**September 24**  
5:01 pm  
City Council  
Budget Hearing  
Laisley Community  
Room

**September 6**  
8 am - 12 pm  
Every Saturday



**THE CELTIC RAY MARKET**  
EVERY SATURDAY!  
8AM-12PM [ISH]

The Market will be open from 8am-12pm. Parking will only be available for our guests in our parking lot by pub and any other nearby streets.

THE OUTSIDE BAR/PUB WILL BE OPEN AT 9AM FOR

- BACON, EGG & CHEESE PASTY-
- SAUSAGE, EGG & CHEESE PASTY-
- EGG & CHEESE PASTY-
- SAUSAGE GRavy PASTY-
- BREAKFAST CHILIS & SAUSAGE GRavy-
- MIMOSAS- BLOODY MARYS- IRISH COFFEE- IRISH COFFEE-

CELTIC RAY

**September 10**  
5:01 pm  
Council Meeting  
and Budget Hearing  
Laisley Community  
Room

**September 23**  
5:00 pm  
City Council  
Workshop/Building  
Permitting  
Laisley Community  
Room

# SAVE THE DATE

## SECOND ANNUAL

# NEIGHBORHOOD FALL FESTIVAL

**FREE TO  
ATTEND**

**TRICK OR  
TREATING**

**FAMILY  
GAMES**

**COSTUME  
CONTEST**

**OCTOBER 25, 2025**

**1:00P.M. - 4:00P.M.**

**PUNTA GORDA  
CHARLOTTE LIBRARY  
401 SHREVE STREET**

**JOIN US AS COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS COME TO LIFE!  
PRESENTED BY:**



**Punta Gorda**



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY  
Libraries & History**





# NEIGHBORHOOD FALL FESTIVAL

**SAT, OCT 25, 2025 PUNTA GORDA CHARLOTTE LIBRARY 1:00 - 4:00 PM**

**COUNTDOWN TO FALL FEST ~ 50 DAYS TO GO!**

**👻 No reason to fear, our first Fright & Delight sponsor is here! 👻**

## THE FIRM

ADVERTISING AGENCY

**⚡ Charged with gratitude for our Punta Gorda Powerhouse sponsors! ⚡**



**Interested in sponsoring the fun? Have a nonprofit for trick or treating?  
Want to know how you can help?**

**For more information contact:  
Ph: 941-575-3309  
[FallFest@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:FallFest@cityofpuntagordafl.com)**

**WELCOME OUR NEWEST  
TRICK OR TREAT PARTNERS!**



**YMCA SWFL**



**HEALTH PLANNING  
COUNCIL OF SWFL**



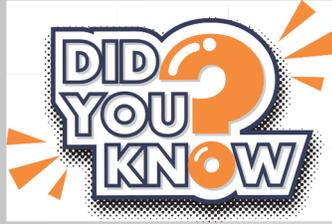
**COMMUNITY CARE PLAN**



**Follow us on Facebook & the City website for updates!  
Facebook - City of Punta Gorda Fall Fest - City of Punta Gorda**



# Billing and Collections



## RETURNED PAYMENTS

Returned items refer to payments that could not be processed against the payment originator's account. These may be returned for various reasons, such as insufficient or unavailable funds, stop payments, closed accounts, post-dated payments, questionable or missing signatures, account cannot be located, counterfeit or fraudulent activity, and others. If a payment is unable to be processed and is returned, Billing and Collections will adjust the account accordingly by reversing the posted payment. Additionally, a returned item fee will be assessed to the account, and a notification letter will be sent to the customer. **Under Florida law, you have 15 days from the date of the notification letter to pay the full amount due, including the service charge, which is as follows:**

- \$25 if the face value does not exceed \$50
- \$30 if the face value exceeds \$50 but does not exceed \$300
- \$40 if the face value exceeds \$300, or up to 5% of the face amount of the check, whichever is greater

***Please note that this fee cannot be waived.*** The fee schedule is governed by Florida Statute 832.07 and is *not determined* by the City of Punta Gorda.

**If you are enrolled in auto-pay and need to update your bank account information or request the cancellation of a pending payment *before the scheduled draft date*, please provide written notice immediately via one of the following methods:**

- **Email:** [pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:pgcollections@cityofpuntagordafl.com)
- **Mail:** 126 Harvey Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950
- **In person:** at the Billing and Collections office located at 126 Harvey Street, Punta Gorda, FL

### **Notice: Temporary Issue with Online Portal Access Continues**

We continue to experience a technical issue where verification emails are not being received by users trying to access many of our online portals. As a result, customers may be unable to log in and use our online services at this time. This issue is affecting business tax receipts, code compliance, building and utility billing. We are actively working with our vendor to resolve the problem as quickly as possible, and we appreciate your patience.

# GOVERNMENT SERVICES

## City Clerk

**2025 Vote-by-mail Ballot Requests** – All requests to receive vote-by-mail ballots on file with the Supervisor of Elections Office expired at the end of the 2024 calendar year in accordance with Florida Statutes. In order to renew your request to vote by mail, contact the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Office at (941)833-5400, visit her office at 226 Taylor Street, or visit her website.

**Signature Update** – Did you know your signature can change significantly over the years? Stop by the Supervisor of Elections’ Office (226 Taylor Street, Unit 120, Punta Gorda, FL 33950) to update your signature.

**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. Unless otherwise noted, all boards meet in in Council Chambers, which is currently located at the Laishley Community Room, 120 Laishley Court.

**New Businesses** – Are you thinking of opening a business in the City? You can learn more about filing for a City business tax receipt on our website. Still have questions? Contact the City Clerk’s Office via email [businessstax@cityofpuntafordafl.com](mailto:businessstax@cityofpuntafordafl.com) or call us at (941)575-3369.

## Utilities

### Administration & Watering Reminders



Got a leak? If you spot water or sewer issues after hours, give us a call at (941) 575-5070 or reach the Water Plant at (941) 639-2057.

### Watering schedules:

We all want green lawns, but Florida law says no watering between 10 am and 4 pm. To keep it fair, here’s when you can water based on your house number.

Ends in 0 or 1	Mon & Thurs
Ends in 2 or 3	Tues & Fri
Ends in 4 or 5	Wed & Sat
Ends in 6 or 7	Thurs & Sun
Ends in 8 or 9	Fri & Tues

You can only water early mornings (12:01 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.) or evenings (4:01 pm to 11:59 pm).



**New lawns:** Feel free to water daily for the first 30 days.

**Car washing and pressure washing:** Go for it, just remember to use water smartly. A nozzle with a shut-off works best.

## Meter Updates



We're in the middle of moving away from our old AMI (automatic meter) system. For now, all meters are being read manually by our contractor, Olameter. Meanwhile, our in-house tech team is testing a new maintenance app to track meter repairs and keep things running smoothly.

## Water Plant Snapshot

Here's what our water plant has been up to this week. We delivered 40.7 million gallons of water to the community, which averages out to about 5.8 million gallons each day.

Rainfall totals came in lower than last year. August brought 7.01 inches compared to 9.23 inches the year before. So far September hasn't given us any rain yet, while last year at this time we had already seen more than 6 inches. Even so, the Shell Creek Reservoir is holding steady at 5.38 feet. That's close to the long-term average of 5.63 feet, a bit above the record low, and still well below the record high.

When it comes to water quality, the current hardness is 116 parts per million, which equals about 7 grains per gallon. That puts our water firmly in the "hard" category. If you use a water softener, that number is what you'll want to set it to. Hard water is safe, but you might notice spots on dishes, faucets, or shower doors.

We also keep an eye on total dissolved solids, or TDS, which is a measure of all the natural minerals in the water. On September 4, TDS measured 301 parts per million. For perspective, that's right around the 15-year average of 289.

This week we've seen it range between 197 and 378, which is very typical for this time of year. All in all, the water quality this week looks steady and in good shape.

## Wastewater Treatment

Behind the scenes, our team treated 23.1 million gallons of wastewater this week, averaging about 3.3 million gallons a day. Crews also stayed busy mowing, trimming, and keeping the grounds neat.

## Water Distribution

Here's what our crews have been working on in your neighborhoods:

- **Fire Hydrants:** Out of 1,417 hydrants, one received maintenance and repair this week. Crews also continued vegetation control around hydrants to keep them accessible.
- **Valves:** Six valves were exercised and re-marked on recently paved roads.
- **Flushing:** Three hydrants were flushed to keep the system fresh and clean.
- **New meters:** Two brand-new meter sets were installed for new construction, with each requiring complete service lines.
- **Service requests:** 12 jobs were completed, including leak repairs, meter problems, low pressure checks, and box replacements.
- **Yard cleanups:** Two cleanups wrapped up with holes filled and new sod laid.

That's the week in Utilities. We're always working hard behind the scenes to keep clean water flowing in and safely treated water flowing out. Thanks for doing your part by following watering schedules, keeping meters clear, and letting us know when you spot an issue.



## Urban Design

### Bayfront Improvement Plans

Plans for Punta Gorda's Bayfront are moving forward, with exciting updates now in motion following design direction from City Council at last week's meeting. This waterfront area is being reimagined to not only reflect the charm of Gilchrist Park but also to create new spaces for relaxation, recreation, and community connection.

The centerpiece of the project will be a new pavilion, designed to match the style and character of the existing pavilions throughout Gilchrist Park. This architectural consistency will help tie the waterfront together, maintaining the park's atmosphere while adding a fresh space for gatherings and events. Surrounding the pavilion, a lush lawn area will provide plenty of room to enjoy sunsets, picnics, or a quiet moment by the water.

To complement these open spaces, the project will also include shaded swings and upgraded landscaping. The new plantings will not only beautify the area but also offer natural shade and comfort. Fun fact: sitting beneath the canopy of a large shade tree can feel up to 10 degrees cooler compared to open sun! This cooling effect will make the bayfront even more enjoyable, especially during Florida's warmer months, while supporting the city's goals for sustainability.



Lot Mowing Program — The lot mowing is currently under way and is scheduled to be completed September 10.

# Public Works

## Administrative Office – As a reminder:

Residents may report a problem using any of the following methods:

- Online: Report a Problem | City of Punta Gorda, FL; Email: [pubworks@pgorda.us](mailto:pubworks@pgorda.us); Phone: 941-575-5050

All report contacts are responded to the same day.

**Canal Maintenance** — Canal Maintenance Crews manufactured 48 seawall panels, filled 10 depressions at residences, and completed mowing at the former BSI, lock, and Sancho Panza pass. The contractor has completed the Mangrove trimming in BSI and is currently working in PGI.

**Dock Match Program** — The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has launched a program that helps connect boat owners in need of temporary docking with others who have available dock space. To learn more or participate, visit the Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance website at [boat2puntagorda.org](http://boat2puntagorda.org) and click on the Dock Match button.

**Dockside Dredging** — Property owners included on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list are not permitted to conduct dockside dredging next to the damaged seawall until repairs are completed. Dredging in these areas could lead to further structural damage.

**Establishing sod after seawall replacement** Laying sod marks the final phase of seawall replacement construction. According to the City ordinance, property owners are responsible for maintaining and establishing the sod once it has been installed. The City will not reimburse water costs incurred during this process.

**Seawall Canal Assessment** — The City Seawall Program has awarded a construction extension contract for Marine Construction Group. Work will begin in May.

**Stabilizing Erosion** — This is a friendly reminder for property owners to routinely inspect the condition of any tarps or plastic covering eroded areas. Over time, exposure to sunlight can cause these materials to become brittle and break down. Using plastic during rain events can help protect the soil and minimize further erosion.

**Vessel Speeds** — Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with damaged seawalls. The city code states that vessels in the canals shall be slow at speed with minimum wake in the waterways within the city limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlets are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.

## Engineering

**Swale Program:** The contractor has completed Andora Dr, Madrid Blvd, Monaco/Tripoli, Royal Poinciana, East Cashew, Rio Tiber, San Mateo Drive, Almar Drive, Flora Lane, and Coral Court. All these locations have been regraded with either new Floratam or Bahia in the ROW. The new sod has been installed at the correct elevations that were set by our Engineering Department. The contractor has begun to re-grade Spoonbill Dr. and Spoonbill Ct. to the new proposed elevations. Please be aware of the equipment and personnel that will be present working in the right-of-way, and pay attention to all regulatory signage and flagging operations.

**City Hall Roof:** The roof materials will be delivered this week to the City Hall, and the contractor will be on-site next week to begin removing the old roof and replacing it with a new. Please be aware of the equipment and personnel that will be present working in the area, and pay attention to certain areas that will be closed off during the operation.

**Tiger Dams:** Public Works employees have begun to install the Earth anchors for the Tiger Dams down at the Herald Court parking garage. The team has been removing the brick where the anchor location is to drill a 30-inch anchor into the ground. Once the anchor is installed, the crew replaces the brick over the anchor and marks the location for any future tidal surge. The crew has installed a total of 43 anchors.



### Facilities Parks and Grounds

- Staff repaired the bathroom door at Herald Court
- Parks Staff continued to fill behind the seawall at Ponce Park
- Weed control in the downtown area has been completed
- Mowing and weed eating at Kiddie Land has been completed

### Right of Way

- Mowing Crews completed mowing in the meadows area and at Hounds on Henry
- Crews poured 6.5 yards of concrete to repair the driveway and sidewalks along Gill Street after rebuilding the storm drain, which had failed
- Crews are working on installing the anchors for the Tiger Dams at the Herald Court Parking Garage area
- Crews regraded the alleyway between Berry Street and Chasteen Street
- Pipe lining on Henry Street has been completed



## Sanitation

**ABCs of Sanitation** – Just a friendly reminder on the basics of Sanitation within the City of Punta Gorda. Visit our website for more information or to schedule a special pick-up: Sanitation | City of Punta Gorda, FL ([punta-gorda.fl.us](http://punta-gorda.fl.us)).

- All trash, recycling, and yard waste must be out at the curb by 5 a.m. on the day of collection to guarantee service.
- Please do not place containers directly on the roadway. The road must remain clear for emergency vehicles at all times.
- Staff is required to place the containers on the grassy area of the right-of-way after being emptied. While staff strive to maintain excellent service, the containers sometimes fall over long after staff leave the area.
- Trash must be bagged inside the can to prevent any wind-blown litter during the collection process. It can also help keep animals out of your garbage. As a friendly reminder, please place any pet waste and pet hair securely inside a bag to prevent the debris from blowing onto the sanitation workers.
- Verify your service area, did you know that some Punta Gorda addresses outside of the City of Punta Gorda limits and serviced by Waste Management? Simply enter your home address, and the City boundaries are outlined in blue: Charlotte County GIS ([charlottecountyfl.gov](http://charlottecountyfl.gov)).

- Construction debris, whole-house clean-outs, and tree removals are not included with your regular service. The property owner is responsible for the clean-up and removal of debris. A whole-house clean-out might require a roll-off dumpster to be placed on the property. The City does not rent dumpsters, and residents are required to obtain a permit by contacting Zoning & Code Compliance (941)575-3352.

### Loose Yard Waste Clamshell Truck Collection Delays

- Loose yard waste piles collection with the clamshell truck is experiencing longer wait times. We ask residents for their continued patience as staff work diligently to complete the tickets in the order in which they are received. Yard waste debris may also be dropped off at the Mid-County Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facility, 19765 Kenilworth Blvd., Port Charlotte. Proof of county residency is required for Mini-Transfer & Recycling Facilities | Charlotte County, FL ([charlottecountyfl.gov](http://charlottecountyfl.gov)). If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. through Fri.

### Vacant Lots

- Vacant lots are not eligible for trash or yard waste services. Please do not place any trash or yard waste on vacant lots. The debris will not be collected. Vacant lots are private property, and placing debris on vacant lots is trespassing.

# Police Department



## Do the Right Thing

The September 2025 Do the Right Thing ceremony was held on Thursday at Florida SouthWestern State College, recognizing the following young people: Wyatt Lindstedt, Colton Riley, Brody Johnson, Ja'Lani Winesett, and Journee Chalder. "Do the Right Thing of Charlotte County was founded in 1995 by the late Captain Don Cerbone of the Punta Gorda Police Department. Over the last 30 years, more than 1,100 students in Charlotte County have been recognized for their academic achievements, athletic accomplishments, acts of heroism, community service, and for doing the right thing. The program's goal remains the same as it was in 1995: to instill positive attitudes and self-esteem, and to publicly recognize students for their achievements.

## Promotions and Swearing-in Ceremony

Wednesday evening, Chief Pamela Smith had the opportunity to swear in two new police officers and promote three others. New officers Sarah Pawlowski and Reiko Sardina were sworn in and officially welcomed to the department. Cody Waldrop and Aaron Russell were both promoted to the rank of Corporal, and Cody Smith was promoted to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. Congratulations to all!



## Volunteer Police Chaplain Positions Available -

The City of Punta Gorda Police Department is seeking dedicated and compassionate Volunteer Police Chaplains to provide spiritual guidance and emotional support to our officers, staff, their families, victims, and families of victims. This vital role involves responding to crises, offering grief support, and fostering community relations. These positions are unpaid and are part of our volunteer program.

- Provide pastoral care and support to officers, staff, and their families during times of crisis, such as death notifications or injuries.
- Attend and participate in funerals and memorial services for officers and staff.
- Offer comfort and support to victims of violent crime and their families.
- Assist the department's peer support team in the aftermath of significant traumatic events.
- Respond to hospitals to provide support to seriously ill or injured officers and their families.
- Counsel police department staff and their families on personal problems and stress.
- Act as a liaison and help foster positive relationships between the department and the community.
- Attend departmental ceremonies, graduations, and other special events.
- Periodically accompany officers on "ride-alongs" and attend roll call briefings to understand law enforcement work.

Please contact our Employee Development Coordinator, Glen Ritta, at 941-575-5571 or [GRitta@cityofpuntagordafl.com](mailto:GRitta@cityofpuntagordafl.com) for additional questions and qualification requirements. Applications can be found at <https://www.ci.puntagorda.fl.us/government/police/volunteers-in-policing-vip>.

**Honoring a Longtime Volunteer** – We recently had the opportunity to honor Ross “Ziggy” Zeigler for 15 years of volunteer service to the city. Ziggy has been donating his time to our community since 2010 and was our regular Sunday Volunteer on Patrol for many of those years. We had a great turnout to celebrate Ziggy’s service, filled with cake and many good memories

## Ross “Ziggy” Zeigler



**Volunteers In Policing Hours** – The Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program contributed 443.5 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during August 2025. 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 via email at [vip@pgorda.us](mailto:vip@pgorda.us).





## Fire Department

### Hurricane Readiness Event

This week, the City of Punta Gorda Fire Department participated in the Hurricane Readiness Event hosted by Hampton Manor of Punta Gorda.

This event was designed to educate both residents and non-residents on the importance of hurricane preparedness, including evacuation planning, proper emergency supplies needed, and understanding the critical roles of first responders before, during, and after a natural disaster.

A big thank you to Hampton Manor of Punta Gorda for hosting such a valuable event and helping our community through education and awareness.



*Thank you for reading!*