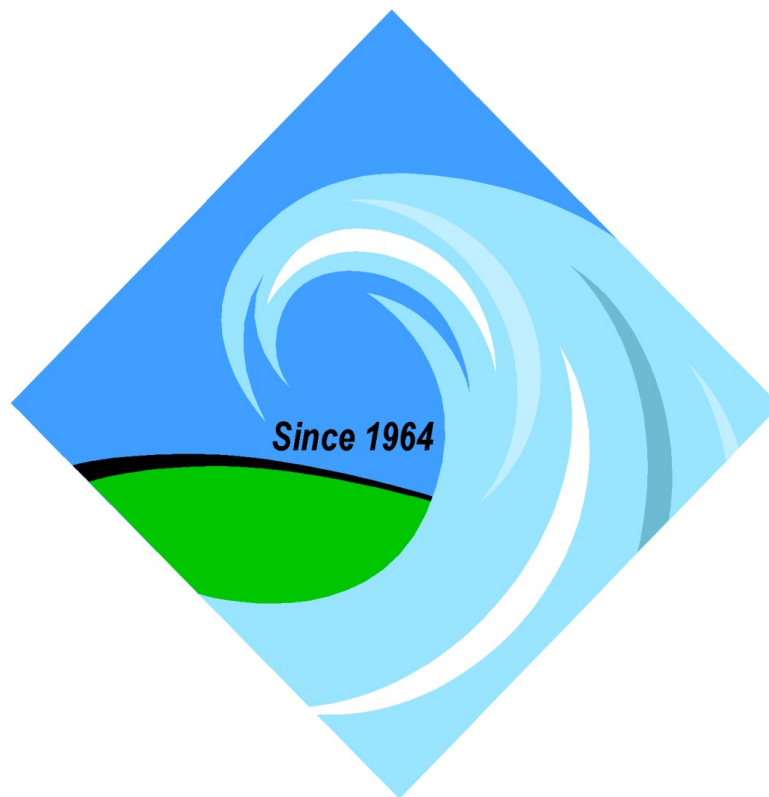


# **ST. MARY'S COUNTY METROPOLITAN COMMISSION**



## **FISCAL YEAR 2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Reporting Period:  
July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019**

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## ST. MARY'S COUNTY METROPOLITAN COMMISSION

The St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission (MetCom) was created by the State Legislature in 1957 as a quasi-governmental, non-profit body, to supply water and sewer service to St. Mary's County and has been providing those services since 1964. MetCom is committed to providing quality, reliable services to St. Mary's County. While fulfilling our mission, we strive to:

- *Conserve and protect our reliable, high quality water supply for present and future generations;*
- *Meet or surpass public health standards, environmental standards, and support fire protection;*
- *Operate, maintain, improve, and manage our water and wastewater infrastructure in a cost-effective manner;*
- *Manage finances to support Commission needs and maintain reasonable water and wastewater rates;*
- *Maintain and adequate, safe and professional workforce; and*
- *Understand and respond to customers' expectations for service.*

As we look back upon the events of the last year, there was progress on several noteworthy capital improvement projects: Award and notice to proceed with construction of the Great Mills Wastewater Pumping Station upgrades; construction award for the Hickory Hills Water Storage Tower and Well; near completion of the Pine Hill Run Interceptor Sewer Rehabilitation project; upgrade of the Town Creek, Piney Point, and St. Clements Shores water systems; construction of upgrades to the St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant to BNR treatment standards that allowed five (5) existing failing systems to connect; final design of the Piney Point Wastewater Pumping Station; and continuing the joint design and construction efforts with the County's Department of Public Works and Transportation on the FDR Boulevard and Patuxent Park Neighborhood Revitalization projects. You will read about these and other efforts throughout the following pages of this Report.

Other non-capital accomplishments in FY 2019 included: the continuation of our successful student Internship Program; implementation of the Rate Study which lowered the rate of increase in usage charges for the first time in over five (5) years; adoption of Debt Management Policy and performance measures to help ensure our financial health; approval of several connection incentive programs; adoption of new comprehensive Procurement Policy; implementation of an eRecording property transfer process with the County Assessment & Taxation Office to capture all past due accounts before properties are sold; established an ongoing partnership with the Office of the Sheriff on a public summer Fire Hydrant "Beat the Heat" Spray Program as a part of a community outreach and education initiative; are piloting an ePlan submittal process; and continuance of our rigorous operations, maintenance, testing, and development review programs. Many other projects and initiatives will soon be underway and are outlined in the Plans and Objectives Section of this Report.

Our staff takes great pride in providing outstanding customer service, while maintaining very high standards of environmental compliance and resource management. We are an accountable and transparent organization and fully comply with the St. Mary's County Open Meetings Act. As the Metropolitan Commission looks forward to another year serving you, we will strive to find ways continue to better meet the needs of our customers as effectively as possible. ***"MetCom is people -- hard working public servants...they do it day in and day out—and I'm proud to be working with them!"***



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George A. Erichsen, P.E.,  
**Executive Director**



The Operations, Maintenance, Permits, Construction and Inspection Departments of the Commission are located at 43990 Commerce Avenue, Hollywood, Maryland 20636. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Telephone: (301) 737-7400 / Website: [www.metcom.org](http://www.metcom.org).



The Administrative Office of the Commission, which includes the Billing, Fiscal, Human Resources and Engineering Departments, is located in the First Colony Commercial Center at 23121 Camden Way, California, Maryland 20619. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Telephone: (301) 737-7400 / Website: [www.metcom.org](http://www.metcom.org).



# GENERAL OVERVIEW

## MISSION STATEMENT

To construct, operate and maintain public water supply and public wastewater conveyance and treatment systems in a manner that is sustainable, reliable, economical and safe for the Commission's employees, the environment, and the citizens of St. Mary's County; and to ensure that construction is timely and in accordance with the St. Mary's County Comprehensive (Land Use) Plan.

## BOARD MEMBERS

MetCom is governed by a Board of Commissioners consisting of seven voting members, and one non-voting member. Voting members represent the Election Districts of St. Mary's County and are appointed by the St. Mary's Board of County Commissioners to serve three year staggered terms. The eighth and non-voting member of the Commission is the Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station Patuxent River, or his designated representative.

The Board Members during FY 2019, ending June 30, 2019, were:

### Commissioners

Bryan M. Barthelme, Chairman  
*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Election Districts*

Robert A. Russell, Vice-Chairman  
*7<sup>th</sup> Election District*

John J. Carey  
*2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Election Districts*

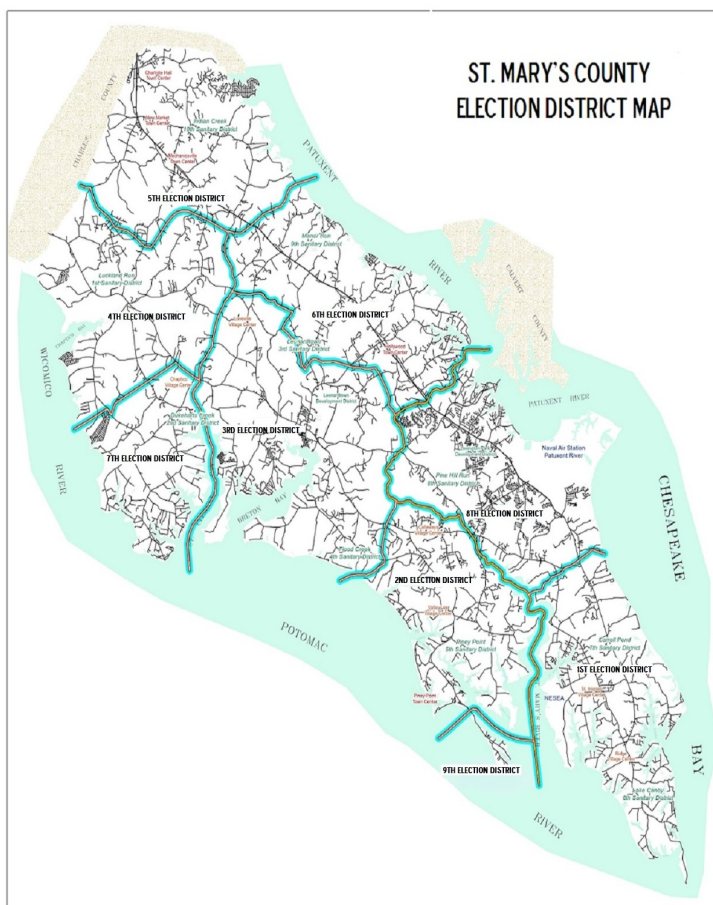
Alice A.M. Gaskin  
*1<sup>st</sup> Election District*

Joseph I. Russell  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Election District*

George M. Thompson  
*6<sup>th</sup> Election District*

Rudolph K. Fairfax  
*8<sup>th</sup> Election District*

Captain Jason Hammond  
*Patuxent River Naval Air Station*



## KEY STAFF

The administrative leadership of the Commission is comprised of an Executive Director and five (5) Department Heads, as follows:

George A. Erichsen, P.E., Executive Director  
Patricia Stiegman, Chief Financial Officer  
M. Christy Hollander, P.E., Chief Engineer  
Michael W. Sullivan, Chief of Facilities and Operations (*Retired February 2019*)  
Edward Hogan, Chief of Facilities and Operations (*May 2019 – Present*)  
Anne Mary B. Cullins, P.H.R., SHRM-CP, Director of Human Resources  
Robert J. Fehn, Sr., Director of Information Technology

Additional information about MetCom and its staff can be obtained at [www.metcom.org](http://www.metcom.org).



Pictured above (*front row*) M. Christy Hollander, P.E., Anne Mary B. Cullins and Patricia Stiegman; (*back row*) George A. Erichsen, P.E., Robert J. Fehn Sr. and Edward Hogan

In March of 2019, Michael “Mike” W. Sullivan, Chief of Facilities and Operations, retired from the Metropolitan Commission after 30-years of service. Mike’s dedication and commitment to the Commission, its customers and the community was monumental. His extensive knowledge of water and sewer operations, coupled with his honesty, integrity and patience were a tremendous asset to the organization. Mike was well respected by his colleagues and is missed by his MetCom family. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



Michael W. Sullivan

# FACILITIES OVERVIEW

## WASTEWATER FACILITIES

### Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility

The Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility (MTWRF) is the largest treatment facility operated by MetCom and serves the Lexington Park, Hollywood and Piney Point areas of St. Mary's County. The facility is currently designed to treat 6.0 million gallons of wastewater per day. The average daily flow to the facility for Fiscal Year 2019 was 4.1 million gallons, with a total of 1.5 billion gallons being treated during the year. At present, a little less than one-third of the facility's design capacity remains available to meet the needs of growth in the community, keeping in mind that some capacity has been allocated for approved projects, which have not yet been constructed.

A \$39 million, 3-year Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) upgrade to the facility was completed in Fiscal Year 2017. As mandated by the USEPA's Chesapeake Bay Agreement, this upgrade significantly reduces the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus discharged from the facility into the Chesapeake Bay. Removal rates for Nitrogen and phosphorus averaged above 90% and went as high as 96.4% for nitrogen and 96.8% for phosphorus. Because

of the performance of the facility, our Operations and Maintenance Division is eligible for \$180,000 in grant funding from the State Bay Restoration Fund each year when available from The Maryland Department of Environment.



The Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility offers educational tours to groups of all sizes

In addition to the Marlay-Taylor facility, MetCom owns and/or operates an additional six (6) wastewater treatment facilities as follows:

- Airedale Road
- Charlotte Hall
- Wicomico Shores
- Chopticon High School
- Forrest Farm
- St. Clements Shores

The Chopticon High School Treatment Facility, is a private wastewater treatment facility that MetCom operates under an agreement with the St. Mary's County Board of Education (BoE). The BoE is responsible for meeting all Maryland Department of the Environment permit requirements and the owner reimburses MetCom for all costs incurred as a part of providing the technical assistance and expertise. During Fiscal Year 2019, approximately 1.6 billion gallons of wastewater was conveyed to these wastewater treatment facilities, which treated a combined average of over 4,300,000 gallons of waste per day.

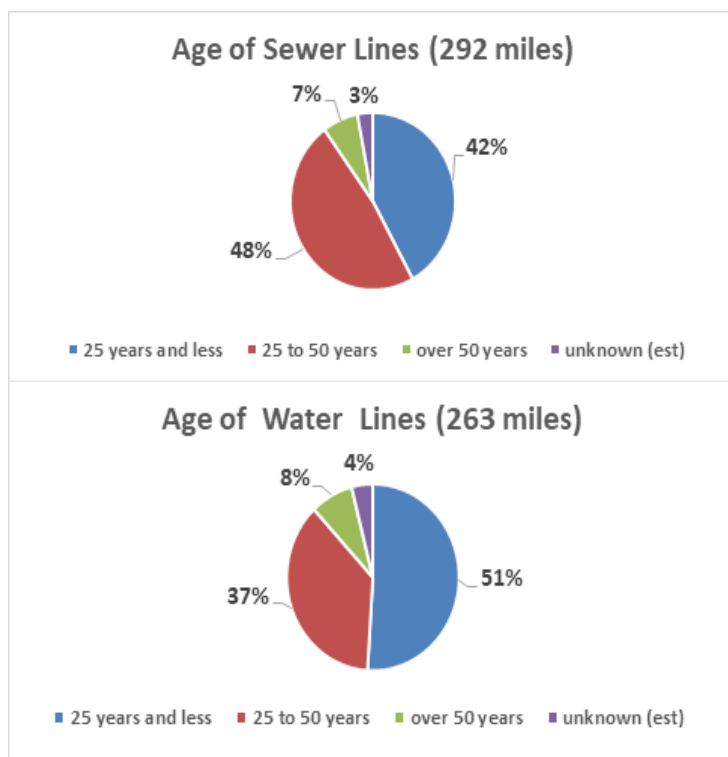


## WATER DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES

MetCom operates 28 water supply and distribution systems throughout the County. The largest of the 28 water systems is the Lexington Park water system, which serves approximately 45,000 citizens of St. Mary's County, and consists of 18 wells and approximately 4.5 million gallons of water storage capacity in above ground storage tanks. The average daily demand for the Lexington Park water system in Fiscal Year 2019 was approximately 2.5 million gallons of water per day, with the ability to supply over 5.0 million gallons of water per day. The remaining 27 water systems consist of 67 wells located throughout the County which provided approximately 1.9 million gallons of storage capacity and delivered an average of 1.1 million gallons of water per day to over 6,200 homes (*an estimated 17,000 citizens*), for a total of approximately 1.3 billion gallons of water supplied during the fiscal year.

## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The operations and maintenance staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to respond to and repair water / sewer service issues. In Fiscal Year 2019, we responded to 1,500 water-related service calls and 2,500 sewer-related service calls.



In addition to emergency response, dedicated staff also perform maintenance activities and / or upgrades to 287 miles of sewer and 257 miles of water lines/mains. Although MetCom's water and sewer infrastructure is aging (*see graphs at left*), due to sound facility planning and capital programming, almost 92% of sewer and 90 % of water infrastructure is less than 50 years.

The Commission utilizes asset management programs to clean, map and evaluate the condition of its assets in conjunction with Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities that is shared with St. Mary's County Government.

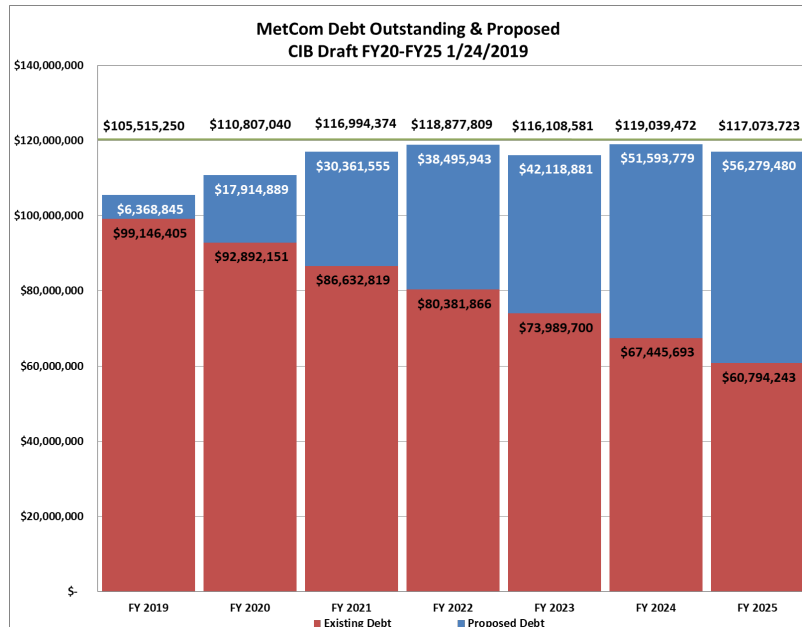
The Division owns and operates a state-of-the-art full service wastewater laboratory and also has a facility that was recently approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment's Water Supply Program as a Certified Water Quality Laboratory. For more information on our water quality testing and analysis programs, refer to page 24.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

MetCom is retiring its debt at between \$5.6M to \$6.1M per year. During the FY 2018 budget cycle, and continuing forward, the Commission made a conscious decision to take advantage of the retiring of existing debt and the rate at which new debt was incurred by establishing an informal combined debt ceiling of \$120M (see *chart at right*). MetCom was able to reduce its projected outstanding debt as a percentage of assessable base over the next six years to below 1% for the period of Fiscal Years 2018 - 2025, well below MetCom's legal limit of 25%. In addition, legislation was passed under House Bill 1055 / Senate Bill 737, which combined the Metropolitan Commission's debt with the debt of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and established a formal combined debt cap at 2.15% of the County's assessable base.



## FY 2018 AUDIT

Every year the Metropolitan Commission is audited by an independent auditor. In FY 2018, it was the opinion of Murphy & Murphy, LLC, that the MetCom financial statements were presented fairly in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S. of America. The financial highlights from the report are shown below:

- ✓ MetCom's total net position increased by \$4.7 million and \$3.7 million, or 4.4% and 3.4%, as a result of operations in FY 2018 and 2017, respectively.
- ✓ During the current year, MetCom's revenue from operations was \$14.1 million, representing an increase of 1.9% over the prior year. The current year increase is mostly due to a 3.75% increase in sewer rates and a 3.0% increase in water rates.
- ✓ MetCom's operating expenses excluding depreciation were \$13.1 million during FY 2018 and \$13.2 million in FY 2017.
- ✓ Depreciation Expense totaled \$6.7 million, an increase of \$0.5 million over FY 017.

- ✓ MetCom's non-operating revenue was \$8.5 million during the current year and \$8.0 million in FY 2017, representing an increase of 5.9% in the current year and an increase of 25.9% in the prior year. The increase in the current year was mainly attributable to the increase in debt service charges and interest income.
- ✓ In FY 2008 MetCom established a trust fund for the management of assets and accounting for financial transactions associated with the provision of retiree health insurance coverage. In FY 2015 MetCom joined in the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) Pooled Other Post Employment Benefit Plan (OPEB) Trust. The balance in trust was \$5.5 million as of 6/30/18 and \$4.8 million as of 6/30/17. In FY 2018 MetCom contributed \$527 thousand, to fully fund the annual required contribution.

To review audited Financial Statements from FY 2012 - FY 2018 please see visit the Financial Report section of our website at <http://metcom.org/node/77>.

## FY 2019 BUDGET

	<b><u>FY19 Original Budget</u></b>	<b><u>FY19 Actual Expenses*</u></b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>		
Sewer Income	\$9,424,836	\$9,338,484
Water Income	5,131,954	5,186,057
Engineering Income	245,100	171,985
Other Income	305,374	581,812
Sewer System Improvement Charges	5,236,990	5,110,561
Water System Improvement Charges	3,549,651	3,545,395
Sewer Capital Contribution Charges	937,063	1,339,718
Water Capital Contribution Charges	887,426	1,607,365
<b>Total Budget Income</b>	<b>\$25,718,394</b>	<b>\$26,881,377</b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		
Sewer Expenses	\$9,775,375	\$9,168,947
Water Expenses	5,022,962	4,370,558
Engineering Expense	245,100	171,985
Debt Service Sewer	6,076,679	4,955,608
Debt Service Water	4,437,077	3,754,483
<b>Total Budget Expenses</b>	<b>\$25,557,193</b>	<b>\$22,421,581</b>
Income Allocated To Reserves	\$161,201	\$4,459,796

\* Unaudited

## USER CHARGES

The St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission does not receive funding from St. Mary's County Government, or any other tax revenue. MetCom's operating and capital budgets are funded from the revenues collected from user service charges and debt service charges. The three primary charges authorized by Chapter 113 of the St. Mary's County Code are; Service Charges; System Improvement Charges; and Capital Contribution Charges, as described below.

**Service Charges** cover the daily operation and maintenance costs of MetCom facilities. These charges are billed monthly, on a per meter or EDU basis, to all MetCom customers who are either connected to, or required to be connected to, a MetCom water and/or sewer system. On July 1 2015, MetCom implemented a new rate structure and customers began being billed on their actual consumption for both water and sewer. The water usage fees are calculated based on meter size and actual usage, in accordance with a tiered structure. On July 1, 2016, two additional changes were made which included the billing for sewer usage at a maximum cap of 10,000 gallons per month for residential customers with a 5/8" meter. The new rate structure was implemented to help encourage water conservation, which was one of the desired goals, but has also resulted in less revenues than anticipated during the subsequent fiscal year(s).

The approved Water Service Rates for Fiscal Year 2019 were:

<b><u>Water Service Rates</u></b>	<b><u>FY19 Water Rates</u></b>	
Non-Metered per EDU/Month	\$	17.44
Metered Rate 5/8" (* standard residential meter)	\$	9.19 **
Metered Rate 1"	\$	22.97 **
Metered Rate 1-1/2"	\$	45.93 **
Metered Rate 2"	\$	73.49 **
Metered Rate 3"	\$	146.98 **
Metered Rate 4"	\$	229.65 **
Metered Rate 6"	\$	459.32 **
Metered Rate 8"	\$	734.89 **
Metered Rate 10"	\$	1,056.42 **
Water Usage Rate per 1,000 Gallons	Tiered	
Water Usage Rate - Tier 1	\$	1.66
Water Usage Rate - Tier 2	\$	3.30
Water Usage Rate - Tier 3	\$	6.61
Irrigation Usage Rate per 1,000 Gallons	Tiered	
Water Usage Rate - Tier 1	\$	3.30
Water Usage Rate - Tier 2	\$	6.61
Hydrant Meter Rate per 1,000 Gallons	\$	3.30

\*\* Tiered rate will depend upon meter size and usage

The approved Sewer Service Rates for Fiscal Year 2019 were:

<b><u>Sewer Service Rates</u></b>	<b><u>FY19 Sewer Rates</u></b>
Non-Metered per EDU/Month	\$ 40.54
Metered Rate 5/8" (* standard residential meter)	\$ 17.19
Metered Rate 1"	\$ 42.97
Metered Rate 1-1/2"	\$ 85.94
Metered Rate 2"	\$ 137.50
Metered Rate 3"	\$ 274.99
Metered Rate 4"	\$ 429.68
Metered Rate 6"	\$ 859.38
Metered Rate 8"	\$ 1,374.97
Metered Rate 10"	\$ 1,976.52
Usage Rate per 1,000 Gallons	\$ 4.67 ***

\*\*\* Residential 5/8" Sewer Service Capped at a Max of 10,000 Gallons per Month

**System Improvement Charges** cover the debt service costs associated with upgrading and replacing existing water and sewer systems and the costs associated with upgrading wastewater treatment plants to serve current customers. Each class of customers pays the same System Improvement Charge per Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU). All properties that abut a public water line and/or sewer line, and that have been allocated capacity on any such line, are required to pay this charge, even if a property is not yet connected to a public water or sewer system. This charge can be revised annually and replaces the former Benefit Assessment charges. The approved System Improvement Charges for FY 2018 and FY 2019 were:

<b><u>Water:</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2018</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2019</u></b>
Residential / EDU / month	\$11.33	\$11.71
Commercial / EDU / month	\$13.60	\$14.05
<b><u>Sewer:</u></b>		
Residential / EDU / month	\$15.09	\$15.09
Commercial / EDU / month	\$18.11	\$18.11

**Capital Contribution Charges** fund the debt service costs associated with the expansion of existing facilities to serve new customers and the addition of new facilities to accommodate growth. This one-time charge is required to be paid at the time a property owner makes application or otherwise is required to connect to a public water or sewer system. Capital Contribution Charges are calculated on a per EDU basis.



The approved Capital Contribution Charges for FY 2018 and FY 2019 were:

<u>Water:</u>	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>
Residential / EDU / Connection	\$10,666.91	\$10,955.87
Commercial / EDU / Connection	\$12,800.29	\$13,147.04
<u>Sewer:</u>		
Residential / EDU / Connection	\$ 6,533.89	\$ 6,941.21
Commercial / EDU / Connection	\$ 7,840.66	\$ 8,329.44

In addition to the above-referenced charges, **Bay Restoration Fees** are also collected at a rate of \$5.00 per monthly per EDU, as mandated by the State of Maryland. MetCom remits these payments directly to the State.

## ENGINEERING OVERVIEW

The Commission's Engineering Department manages an array of tasks that include construction inspection, capital improvement budget development, permit issuance, construction plan review, plat and easement review, capital project design and construction, and maintenance of MetCom's GIS databases with the input of new and existing infrastructure. Many of the GIS layers are now shared with the County government and available to the public.



Engineering staff reviews new and redevelopment projects submitted for connection to the water and sewer systems as part of the County's development review process. In order to protect the integrity of the water and sewer systems, projects must comply with all applicable rules, regulations and standards. This year, approximately

300 development plans and plats were reviewed, ranging from large-scale capital projects to small, single family homes. Commission staff also performed several designs in-house and inspected the water and sewer services for several commercial and industrial sites, which are described in the Fiscal Year 2019 Accomplishments section of this Report. Additionally, developer projects are routinely monitored and inspected by staff. Approximately \$3.39M in surety bonds remained in place during FY 2019 to ensure contract completion in the event of contractor default.

The capital improvement budgeting and planning includes scheduling, cost estimating, design, permitting, land acquisition, construction, inspection services, and technical assistance on administering grants and loans. The approved FY 2019 capital improvement budget included 7 new water and 11 new sewer projects budgeted at \$2,698,396 and \$3,823,915, respectively along with several prior approved projects.

## HUMAN RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Human Resources is responsible for Employment, Recruiting, Compensation Administration, Benefits, Wellness, Training and Development, Safety and Risk Management, Employee Relations and Regulatory Compliance of all Metropolitan Commission staff. During FY 2019, the Human Resources Department:

- Received and processed 801 applications;
- Posted 143 employment notices;
- Filled 41 vacant positions; and
- Facilitated 17 employee promotions.



## STAFFING

Since FY 2017, no new full time positions have been approved for inclusion into the operating budget. As of June 30, 2019, MetCom had filled 93 of the 96 funded positions, as follows:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Full Time	65	23
Part Time	0	0
Intern	1	3
<u>Contract</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>27</b>



As of June 30, 2019, MetCom's employees, classified by years of service, was as follows:

<u>Service Years</u>	<u># Employees</u>
30 + years	5
25-29 years	4
20-24 years	8
15-19 years	10
10-14 years	12
5-9 years	15
<5 years	39



**MetCom Staff Members participating  
in a Length of Service Award  
Presentations**

## BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

The Human Resources staff attended several seminars, classes and training events throughout the year to keep abreast of the ever-changing compliance issues with regard to employee benefits and to stay current with benefit strategies.

The following tabulation highlights several benefits-related activities that Human Resources has facilitated this year:

Activity	Statistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationwide Retirement Solutions Retirement Counseling Sessions</li> <li>4 Retirements</li> <li>7 Worker's Compensation Claims</li> <li>3 Family Medical Leave Applications</li> <li>Open Enrollment Information Session</li> <li>Flu Shots</li> <li>Biometric Screenings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>81% of employees participate in MetCom's medical insurance</li> <li>83% of employees participate in MetCom's dental insurance</li> <li>60% of employees participate in the 457B Retirement Plan</li> <li>55% of employees are enrolled in the Short Term Disability</li> <li>49% of employees have additional life insurance</li> <li>18% of employees have ancillary insurance (AFLAC)</li> <li>6 employee participates the Tuition Reimbursement Program</li> <li>42% of employees participate in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA)</li> <li>100% employees participate in the State Retirement System (mandatory)</li> </ul>

## TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT



MetCom works diligently to meet all legal requirements for training as well as provide training that will enhance levels of service to our customers, limit our liability, and improve their respective skill sets. Human Resources (HR) helps facilitate and track all required classes for water / wastewater operator and Superintendent Licenses. We currently have 39 licensed employees, with 66 individual licenses and certifications, including competent climber / rescuer (*see photo at left*). HR further tracks all Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL's) and physicals associated with such licenses. We currently have 22 employees who hold a CDL license.

As of June 30, 2019, MetCom had 3 Professional Engineers on staff, one Professional Human Resources and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) – Certified Professional, and a Certified Professional Public Buyer. In Fiscal Year 2019, employees participated in a total of 160 safety classes and received 1,889 hours of training. MetCom also received three (3) Training Grants from Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) in the amount of \$4,776.

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Metropolitan Commission (MetCom) maintains a paid internship program to assist college students. These programs help students gain industry knowledge they may not learn elsewhere; provides students with real, meaningful work that can be captured on their resumes; brings fresh, new ideas and perspectives; helps the staffing needs of the organization; and could lead to their hiring as a full-time employee with the organization.



Quotes from our recent interns:

- ❖ *"Throughout my time as a MetCom laboratory intern, I have learned many skills that will help carry me into the next steps of my career... We're constantly looking for new ways to increase efficiency and maximize group efforts to work as a successful team... Being a part of data entry and analysis has also been a key part of my experience, as it demonstrates a certain level of responsibility and capability. Overall, the lab intern position has provided me with endless new knowledge and skills that will no doubt come into play in my future career."*
- ❖ *"This internship is my first time being able to practice engineering in the real world. There is so much more to engineering than my original idea of doing calculations in a little room all day...This internship meant to me that my one-dimensional idea of what engineering is has since been transformed, and it has been a lot of fun learning as much as possible about water techniques and engineering practices.."*
- ❖ *"St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission's (MetCom) internship program was a very eye-opening experience for me. Prior to the internship I never gave much thought to the water running through the homes and streets where I grew up. I now realize that there is hard work and dedication behind every drop of water that flows from my faucet. The internship was also able to set me up for my future role within MetCom as the Purchasing Assistant."*
- ❖ *"Being an intern at St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission has influenced my career tremendously. My first week as an intern was definitely a week to remember. I learned so many new things with how to take payments, how to answer phones, and most importantly how to deal with an upset customer. As I look back from when I was an intern, I am very grateful for the opportunity that was given to me because I would not be where I am today without it. Starting my first full time job was a lot to take in but the help and support I got from my coworkers and supervisor helped me throughout the whole process. I would recommend the intern program to anyone that is looking to get a step in the right direction. Being an intern has helped me grow and meet such wonderful people."*

To learn more about the MetCom internship program, please visit our website at [www.metcom.org](http://www.metcom.org) and select the Human Resources tab.



## RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management is a collaborative effort between the HR Department and the Operations Department. HR and the Chief of Facilities and Operations work together to promote safety and protect the employees and property of MetCom. Several programs are in place to help us with that objective, including a workers' compensation program; drug and alcohol testing program, fully insured liability program and a risk management program. In FY 2019, there were only five (5) work related injuries reported with workers' compensation claims totaling only \$1,940.43 and five (5) lost work days.



The HR Director and the Safety Officer also coordinate MetCom's **Drug and Alcohol Testing Program** (see photo at left) which includes pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, post-accident, return-to-duty and follow-up testing. The program involves coordination with Deer Oaks, MetCom's Employee Assistance Program provider, for substance abuse counseling when needed.

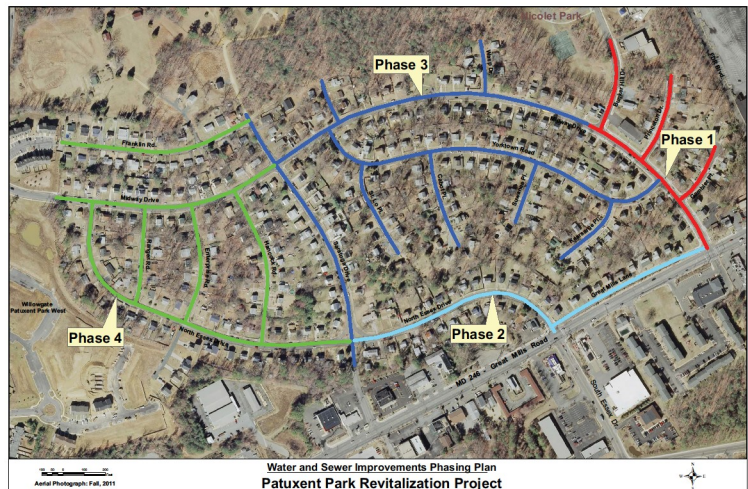
## FISCAL YEAR 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Piney Point Water System** and the **St. Clements Shores Phase 1 Water System**. The completion of two major water line replacement projects was accomplished. These systems were built in the 1940's and 1950's and collectively serve approximately 365 residential customers with the Piney Point system also serving 110 commercial EDUs. The complete replacement of the existing waterlines with new larger 8 and 12 inch mains, increased reliability of the water systems, increased flow, and provided new infrastructure in locations that had reached the end of their useful lives. Both projects were funded by low interest MDE loans.
- **FDR Boulevard Phase 1B** was completed and extends from First Colony to Old Rolling Road. Approximately 2,000 linear feet of new waterline was installed creating a loop in the system increasing reliability of the overall system. Phase 1C is under construction and is scheduled to be complete in the winter of 2019/2020. Phase 3 is under design and has been coordinated with the St. Mary's County Department of Public Works & Transportation's (DPW&T) construction schedule. Construction of Phase 3A should begin in the summer of 2020.



- Patuxent Park Revitalization Project** continues with MetCom's coordinated efforts with the County's DPW&T to complete the rehabilitation and replacement of existing water and sewer infrastructure that includes water mains, service lines, and laterals. MetCom has completed Phases 1, 2 and 3 to date and is nearing completion of the final Phase 4 (see *Phasing Plan at right*). A combination of relining efforts and direct replacement will allow for the sanitary sewer system, built in the 1940's, to be upgraded to current MetCom standards and reduce infiltration. DPW&T improvements include storm drain upgrades and replacements along with roadway and sidewalk revitalization. MetCom's Phase 4 water and sewer underground construction is scheduled to be completed by winter 2019, ahead of DPW&T's efforts.



- St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).** In an effort to improve the wastewater treatment and effluent disposal capabilities at this facility, the Commission completed the initial phases (*A1 - treatment and A2 - disposal*) of the upgrade project. Phase A1 improved treatment in the cold weather months (*the plant approached its permitted Nitrogen limit of 13mg/l*) and upgraded primary screening to reduce process demands on the treatment system. A successful pilot test of a new treatment (BioWeb) system was also completed at the end of summer 2018. Phase A2 installed sand trenches in two of the four rapid infiltration basins to improve percolation of treated effluent disposal. These upgrades resulted in MDE approval of new connections needed for several existing failing septic systems in the area.

With the completion of Phase A, a joint planning effort between MetCom, the Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM), MDE, and the St. Mary's County Department of Environmental Health MetCom was begun to establish a new service area for a plant expansion as a part of Phase B.

- Facilities Energy Audit.** The planned audit was awarded to help establish a priority list of efficiency retrofits that could be implemented to reduce both energy consumption and the associated expenses. Tasking includes completion of a progressive three level ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers) audit with a comprehensive review of utility records, facility performance, benchmarking, implementation costs, and energy conservation measures. The detailed financial analyses and Return on Investment estimates of the initial tasks are near completion and should be incorporated into the CIB/operating budget in the coming fiscal year.

- **Hunting Quarter Well #1** and the **King Kennedy Well** replacements were awarded for construction, both of which were initially built in the 1970's. The Hunting Quarter well failed unexpectedly in July 2017 and a second well (*into the Aquia aquifer*) is needed as backup and for overall system reliability. The King Kennedy well is being drilled into the Patapsco aquifer, which is a scheduled replacement for Well #2 which was previously abandoned. Both wells are scheduled to be completed in the winter of 2019/2020.
- The **Pine Hill Run Road Interceptor Rehabilitation** was awarded and is now under construction. This section of the existing Three Notch Interceptor was originally built in the late 1960's and collects sewerage from the majority of the Lexington Park and Piney Point Systems. This project will replace approximately 1,900 linear feet of the existing 33" diameter sewer pipe, which had become deteriorated due to hydrogen sulfide corrosion, with new that will provide increased capacity between Forest Park Road/Gate 3 to the Marlay-Taylor Wastewater Reclamation Facility (MTWRF).
- **Secondary Clarifier Tank #1**, is one (1) of four (4) existing clarifier tanks originally built in 1967 at the Marlay-Taylor facility. In early 2017, it became non-operational due to vertical displacement of approximately 18"-24" on one side and up to 6" on the other side. The structure was determined to be unsalvageable and design work was initiated in July 2018, which should be completed during the next fiscal year.

- The **Great Mills Wastewater Pump Station Upgrade** is currently under construction. The existing station was originally commissioned in the early 1980's and was over-capacity, in need of major upgrades, subjected to flooding from the adjacent St. Mary's River, and was in conflict with the planned State Highway Administration widening project near the intersection of MD 246 and MD 5. The proposed new state of the art station will more than double the capacity to



approximately 1,500 EDUs of projected growth, will be capable of pumping an estimated 1,000 gallons per minute, and will be equipped with an emergency back-up generator and pump. Design is 90% complete.

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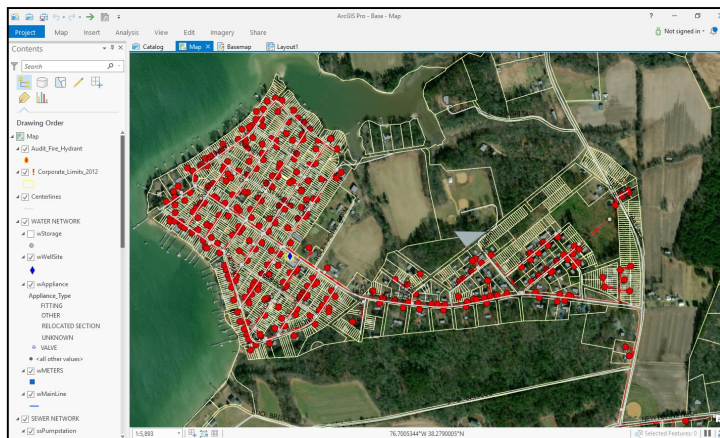
The project also includes the construction and replacement of approximately 1,260' of sewer lines, an 18" gravity line and an 8" sewer force main, which will reconnect to the existing 8" force main. The majority of the facility will be constructed underground (*i.e. wet well pump room and the dry well pump room*) with only the control room, electrical room, emergency generator and pumps visible on the surface. Construction is anticipated to be complete in winter/spring of 2020/2021.



## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)


The Engineering Department maintains MetCom's GIS database. This database includes the existing locations of the existing water and sewer facilities. In FY19, approximately 5,000 water main segments and 2,100 sewer and force main segments were added to the database. The GIS layers are now shared with the County and are available to the public.

The GIS is being utilized to plan and develop the scope of the St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades by defining the proposed Service Area and mapping the number of connections that may be needed.



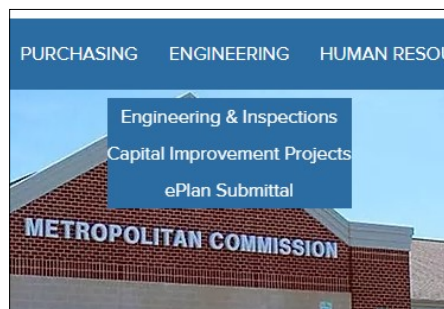
## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

As discussed on Page 13, in addition to MetCom funded or Capital Improvement projects, MetCom's Engineering Department reviews developer funded projects as a part of the County's formal permitting process. These projects range from single and multi-family residential developments to commercial developments including retail, industrial, and restaurant uses. This allows for a safe and maintainable countywide water & sewer system is achieved through design review and construction inspection performed by MetCom staff. The number of new connections approved each year are critical to the overall funding of the Commission. Some notable projects include:

- **Patuxent Cove Phase 1** is a multi-family residential development that will consist of 60 residential units and 1 community building. This project will be served by both public water and sewer facilities and includes a gravity sewer system and water / sewer connections to each building with hydrants throughout the development for fire flow protection.
- 
- The **VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic** is a 24,000 square foot facility located in Charlotte Hall on the northbound side of Three Notch Road just north of Charlotte Hall School Road. This project will connect into the existing public water line running along Three Notch Road.
  - **Patuxent River Dental** is a 5,276 square foot dental office located off of Three Notch Road just West of Maple Road. This new building will be connected to existing public water and sewer facilities in the area and will include the installation of a new duplex grinder pump and water service line to serve the building.



- **Woods at Myrtle Point Recreation Facility** (Section 4) consisting of a new community pool, playground and daycare was approved and permitted for construction. This development included a new water service line, a new duplex grinder pump, and a sewer force main connecting to the existing gravity network in the previously constructed Section 1.
- **Design Manual Update.** A comprehensive update to the 2009 Design Manual has been initiated. This update will included an updated list of approved materials, checklists, construction details and specifications along with text amendment clarifications. Additionally, the Water and Sewer Cost Estimate form will be updated with historical bid data to provide the Commission with more accurate figures for surety and bonding of developer projects. This updates will be posted for comment and should be approved and issued for use in the first part of FY 2020.
- **ePlan Submittal Initiative.** The Department is also planning to streamline the review process by introducing a platform for electronic plan submissions. A pilot study of the process is underway and will be designed to better serve the development community. Engineering is closely working with the IT department to set up a digital drop box to allow engineering firms to digitally submit plans / large for review. Once the pilot is complete the Commission will look to implement this fully in the coming fiscal year. Visit <https://www.metcom.org/> and click on the Engineering tab.



## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

- **Charlotte Hall Wastewater Facility Acquisition.** The Metropolitan Commission had been operating the private Charlotte Hall Square Wastewater Facility with the private system owners being fully responsible for the costs of all operating, maintenance and repairs. Under the provisions of a prior 2009 Acquisition Agreement, the authorization for conveyance was approved by the Commission and the respective deed, easement, bill of sale and declaration of covenants was recorded on April 30, 2019. The associated Groundwater Discharge Permit has also been transferred to the Metropolitan Commission by the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- **Consumer Confidence Reports.** Our Annual Water Quality Report reports may be viewed online at: <https://www.metcom.org/operations>. There are 28 individual reports that cover all testing completed from January through December 2018. We are pleased to report that our compliance with all State and Federal drinking water laws remains exemplary. As in the past, we are committed to delivering the best quality water. To that end, we remain vigilant in meeting the challenges of source water protection, water conservation, and community education while continuing to serve the needs of all of our water users.

- **Water and Sewer Line Right-of-Way Clearing.** In 2014, MetCom began a right of way (ROW) clearing initiative to ensure there was the ability to quickly access water and sewer lines, located in wooded areas, in the event of an emergency. During Fiscal Year 2019, approximately 53,000 linear feet of right of way was maintained with significant areas including the Bay Interceptor, Cedar Cove, California Run and St. Clements Shores communities.
- **Station Upgrades and Rehabilitation.** During Fiscal Year 2019, MetCom completed numerous upgrades and rehabilitation projects on water and wastewater pumping stations. These projects ranged in scope from replacing pumps, fences, emergency generators and piping to complete overhaul of the stations with the ultimate focus on reliability, efficiency and environmental protection. Water stations that were addressed included Piney Point Landings, St. Clements Shores, King and Kennedy and Hunting Quarters. Wastewater stations that received upgrades in Fiscal Year 2019 included California Run, Hunting Quarters, Laurel Glen, St. Mary's City, Wildewood #2 and Waters Edge.
- **Water Tank Inspection and Rehabilitation.** MetCom also continued the inspection and prioritized rehabilitation of existing water storage tanks. During Fiscal Year 2019, two ground-based water storage tanks were inspected. This inspection and rehabilitation project will continue in future years in order to improve and maintain the reliability of MetCom's water storage facilities. MetCom staff is shown (*at right*) installing a new water storage tank at the Piney Point Landings Water Station.
- **Sewer Use Regulations (SUR).** Section 113-11 of Article 19 of the Code of Public Local Laws of St. Mary's County provides the Metropolitan Commission with the authority to adopt rules, regulations and requirements pertaining to public sewer systems. On April 25, 2019, the update to the prior 1997 Regulations were approved by the Commission following a public comment period, forwarded Maryland Department of the Environment, and posted on the MetCom website. The intent and purpose of the SUR is to regulate the use of public and private Sewers and drains, private sewage disposal, the installation and connection of building sewers, the discharge of waters and wastes into the public sewer systems, and to provide penalties for violations.
- **Underground Sewer Asset Rehabilitation** In an ongoing effort to combat corrosion and groundwater infiltration, MetCom maintains ongoing Sewer Manhole / Wet Well Rehabilitation, and Sewer Main / Lateral Line Rehabilitation projects. In Fiscal Year 2019, 50 sewer manholes were expected to be repaired, relined and /or rehabilitated in an effort to increase the overall life span at a significantly less cost as opposed to outright replacement.



- **“Beat the Heat” Spray Program.** MetCom has been working with the Office of the Sheriff’s Lexington Park Community Oriented Policing (COPs) Unit to establish an ongoing partnership on a public summer water spray program as a part of a community outreach and education initiative. This new public service partnership with the Office of the Sheriff has resulted in several successful, well attended events over the summer. This program is made possible through the use of spray caps (diffusers and gate valves) that reduce the flow rate from the hydrants which also keeps children and other pedestrians safe from the force of a normal unrestricted spray from a hydrant.



- **Fire Hydrant Testing and Identification.** MetCom owns and maintains over 2,600 fire hydrants within the 28 water systems. In order to ensure the hydrants are available in an emergency, and to meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Insurance Service Offices (ISO) guidelines, MetCom contracts with a third-party contractor to test and inspect each fire hydrant at least once every three years. 1,078 MetCom fire hydrants were inspected and tested by our contractor this year. Each fire hydrant is uniquely identified through a database, and GIS maps are used by local fire departments to quickly locate fire hydrants in an emergency. In FY2019, we hope these efforts will contribute to the successful upgrade to the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department’s ISO Public Protection Classification from a Class 3 to a Class 2. This would be significant for the Fire Department and the surrounding community that it serves because, in general, the price of fire insurance in a community with a good Public Protection Classification (PPC) is substantially lower than in a community with a poor PPC.

- **Sewer Main Line Inspections.** Upon review of the collected data, MetCom is able to initiate the most effective rehabilitation strategies. In order to focus and direct rehabilitation efforts on underground sewer mains, MetCom utilizes a series of technologies to help identify and prioritize maintenance and repair efforts. These technologies include Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) of gravity sewer lines to inspect the inside of pipes, pipe connections and manholes (*see photo at right*); cellular-based water level monitoring in the pipelines and sewer gas monitoring. In Fiscal Year 2019, in addition to other smaller sewer line inspection projects, MetCom staff completed an evaluation of the South Hampton and Essex South Neighborhoods.





## LABORATORY: WATER QUALITY TESTING & ANALYSIS

- **State Certified Water Quality Laboratory.** On December 13, 2018, the Commission received the formal State Certified Water Quality Laboratory designation from MDE's Water Supply Program. This designation allows Commission personnel to perform total coliform and E.Coli bacteriological tests at our laboratory facility located at the Larry K. Petty Building. As a result, staff will have the capability to analyze nearly 90 total coliform and E.coli test samples in house, which will save the Commission approximately \$700 - \$800 each month.
- **Drinking Water Sampling.** In fiscal year 2019, approximately 2,800 drinking water samples were collected by MetCom staff to determine compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Some of these samples were tested in-house, others were tested by a third party laboratory for parameters such as bacteria (*coliform*), lead / copper (*triennially*), arsenic, fluoride, nitrates, metals and disinfection byproducts. pH levels are also monitored monthly (*624 samples*) and chlorine concentrations are analyzed twice per week (*5,408 samples*) by in-house operations staff at each of our 55 water pumping stations for submission to the MDE. Turbidity is also analyzed only when the operators suspect the water to be cloudy or there are customer complaints regarding cloudy water.
- **Full Service Wastewater Laboratory.** At the Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility, the Commission owns and operates a state-of-the art full service wastewater laboratory. This lab meets and exceeds all Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requirements for wastewater laboratory testing, including accuracy testing on Discharge Monitoring Report Quality Assurance (DMRQA) and Standard Methods in the Examination of Water and Wastewater.
- **Wastewater Sampling.** In addition to drinking water sampling, over 28,000 wastewater analyses were conducted in FY 2019 at each of our 7 wastewater treatment plants. These analyses were conducted to determine compliance with the federal Clean Water Act (see *photo at left*). Water quality tests are performed on water entering and leaving each treatment process at the plants and throughout the Commission's distribution system. These analyses consisted of parameters such as bacteria (*coliform*), bio-chemical oxygen demand, nitrogen, phosphorus, suspended solids, pH, dissolved oxygen, acids, alkalinity and chlorine concentrations. The state and federal testing and analyses requirements under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits helps ensure the quality of the effluent being released into receiving surface waters.



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## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Over the past year, the IT Department has upgraded servers, computing equipment, systems and software in order to improve the work environment for MetCom personnel and enhance information interchange, access and customer experience. We have added more data storage, replaced older computing equipment and generally overhauled many systems that no longer meet our computing standards. Some examples of these efforts include:

- **MetBoard Portal.** In keeping with our mission to modernize many of the functions of MetCom, we created a new internet-accessible “portal” hosted locally on our web server. Using a more accessible design, the new streamlined website includes additional features such as in-page viewing, simplified navigation, and Google’s Search Console allows the Commissioners to access the meeting content in “real time” and a much more efficient and user-friendly manner during televised Board meetings.
- **Cell Tower Leasing.** In addition to using water towers for SCADA antennas, the Commission also leases tower tops to various cellular phone companies as Cell Sites. There are currently six (6) active leases in place with various cellular carriers, which provides revenues from rental fees. MetCom realized \$113,643 in FY 2019 and is anticipating over \$128,000 from cell carriers in FY 2020.
- **Cityworks Integration.** The Cityworks system software controls work orders, maps the water and wastewater systems, centralizes GIS mapping and tracts inventory along with other essential functions. The vendor, Azteca System, LLC, worked with us to script a database connection between our new ERP financial software and Cityworks. This allows meter work order information to transfer over to Cityworks where a history can be kept of work performed on the meters. We also maintain a complete inventory of meter locations produced from in field location with GPS equipment through this software.
- **Bluetooth Technology.** Purchased new “hands free” Bluetooth technology for operations work vehicles as a part of a safety initiative. Self-contained transceivers fit over visors and require no contact from the driver to receive and send calls.
- **Internet Access.** – Utilizing our redundant fiber optic cable we were able to seamlessly attach to the County’s NetMD Internet connection. This new connection is drastically faster and much more reliable than our cable modem which will now be used as a backup only connection. The fiber connection is capable of over 500MBs, in and out, and allows customers, vendors and employees to significantly reduce the time lost in waiting for large amounts of data to be transferred. This connection was provided by the County through their “networkMaryland™” fiber feed that connects government agencies throughout the State to the existing high speed Internet backbone, statewide.





- **SCADA System.** The systems have also been getting attention this past year after the previous year's upgrade to high speed data. Some of these changes and improvements are as follows:
  - ✓ Added repeaters on sites to enhance and extend range of signals without having to build new towers and sites.
  - ✓ Added logic to operate and monitor new high efficiency "Godwin" pumps at select facilities.
  - ✓ Added logic and custom screens to the system to give operators easier access and more control for "auto-controlled" stations in seven water systems.
  - ✓ Switched over to new "HT4" operating system for all workstations greatly enhancing the security of the SCADA systems (see screenshot at right).



## FISCAL

- **Debt Management Policy.** One of the keys to sound financial management is the development of a debt policy. A debt management policy was approved by the Commission in May 2019 establish limits on the amount of outstanding debt and the amount of annual debt service and was established based on a prior Debt Policy Study prepared by Davenport & Company. The debt policy is intended to demonstrate a commitment to long-term financial planning and incorporates several debt performance measures provides to provide general guidance to MetCom decision makers during annual budget planning. The four (4) key ratios measure the financial health of MetCom and are performed annually. This is how MetCom performed during FY 2019:
  - ✓ Debt Service Coverage. This ratio measures MetCom's ability to meet its annual debt service requirements after all operational expenses. MetCom is within the target range of between 1.26 – 1.60. This means MetCom can fund its debt service requirement 1.37 times after all operational expenses.
  - ✓ Annual combined Customer Bill vs. Median Household Income. The ratio indicates the annual burden for cost of service and bill affordability for ratepayers. This indicator was used in the development of the rates for FY 2020. The measurement is made on an average usage of 5,000 gallons of water per month and again on 7,500 gallons of water per month. The average bill is measuring less, at 1.24% for 5,000 gallons and just over the 1.5% target ratio at 1.51% for 7,500 gallons. The Lexington Park area is also evaluated separately.
  - ✓ MetCom's Sufficient Operational Reserves. Measurement of liquidity that gauges flexibility to pay near term obligations. Operational reserves should be

*maintained between 90 and 180 days. FY 2019 measured at 241 days. Exceeding the target, allows for operational leeway in future budgeting.*

- ✓ *Outstanding Debt vs. Operating & Debt Service Revenues.* *This ratio provides an indication of a system's overall leverage and fixed costs. MetCom's target is to not exceed 5 times the operating and debt service revenues in any given year. FY 2019 has proven to be even less than the prior two fiscal year.*

The Study further points out that we have recently implemented many best practices that have, better aligned project timing with future borrowing, and limited the amount of new debt to help reduce rate pressure on customers.

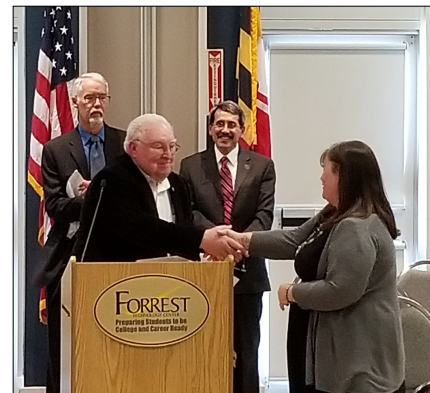
- **Growing the Capabilities of our Enterprise Software.** Late in FY 2018, the newly purchased Enterprise Software, Edmunds & Associates, Inc. went "live". During this year, we have implemented the Accounts Receivable module. This module automates the tracking of any Account Receivables (ARs) issued outside the utility billing process, improving the timeliness are recording of all revenue.
- **Policies & Procedures.** Several policies were approved by the Commission that improves overall operations (*i.e. Procurement Policy*) and that were specifically intended to assist our customers such as: an application and financial criteria to determine the eligibility of a homeowner for a deferral of monthly charges or the exemption of the Bay Restoration Fee to avoid delinquency, penalties, or tax sale; a policy to assist customers in requesting "relief" of unusually high or unexpected monthly water bill(s) resulting from excessive water usage; clear direction to customers who may be requesting reductions in their bills due to an unfortunate circumstance beyond their control; and bankruptcy-billing collections procedures that provide guidelines for handling utility bills and defaults in the event of a bankruptcy.
- **2019 Tax Sale.** Per The Code of St. Mary's County, Maryland, Chapter 113-12(D), MetCom service charges, system improvement charges, capital contribution charges and late charges and penalties are a first lien against the property against which it is assessed until paid. Such properties may be sold at the same time and in the same manner as properties are sold for County taxes. The tabulation below reflects the 2019 Tax Sale data:

Total Accounts At Tax Sale 3/8/2019	Accumulated Past Due Plus Deposit & Fee's through June, 2019	Bank Owned or in Foreclosure	Total Accounts Sold at Tax Sale	Total Amount Paid at Auction
28 Residential	\$43,832.03	0 Residential	26 Residential	\$2,633,000
1 Commercial	\$ 1,251.72	0 Commercial	1 Commercial	\$ 290,000
<b>29 Total</b>	<b>\$45,083.75</b>	<b>0 Total</b>	<b>27 Total</b>	<b>\$2,923,000</b>

- **Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability (OPEB).** The total OPEB liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of June 30, 2018, rolled forward to June 30, 2019. The audited OPEB liability is \$3,057,649.
- **Rate Study Update.** Service rates have increased annually at 3% for water and 3.75% for sewer for the last five years based on a prior 2014 study. In FY 2019, MetCom initiated an update to the initial Study, to provide several options, and to determine if a more moderate rate of increase could be achieved. As part of the FY 2020 Budget process (Jan/Feb 2019), the Board discussed and considered several rate options alternatives which will be implemented in FY 2020 that will still meet the projected annual cost requirements and the reserves to recommended policy levels by the end of the next five-year period.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Employee Handbook Update.** During Fiscal year 2019, a comprehensive Employee Handbook update was completed in-house by the Human Resources Department, with input from staff, in an effort to: incorporate new policies or revised existing policies not previously included; adjust to changes in federal and state law (*i.e. Maryland has mandated Sick and Safe Leave containing several provisions relating to how and organization must provide leave to its employees*); address legislative changes and workplace incidents. The updated Handbook was approved by the Board with an effective date of July 1, 2019.
- **Scholarship Program.** A Scholarship for the Children and Grandchildren of MetCom Employees was established in 2018. This Scholarship program is funded by the generous donations of a Metropolitan Commission Board Member, Mr. Keith Fairfax and is independently administered through the Business, Education and Community Alliance (BECA). No customer/rate payer's monies are being utilized to establish or supplement the Scholarship. Employees also have the opportunity to personally contribute to the Scholarship fund through payroll deduction. The Scholarship consists of a total award of \$2,500, shared among up to five applicants, not less than \$500 per applicant with a maximum of \$1,000 awarded per applicant. This year's winner and first recipient, was Alyssa Fox. Ms. Fox attends the University of Maryland where she majors in Government and Politics with a concentration in International Relations. Ms. Fox was awarded the scholarship at the annual BECA Scholarship Award Celebration, where her mother Dawn Lopez (*pictured above*) accepted on her behalf. Eligible applicants include high school seniors, high school graduates or current college students who have earned a minimum 2.5 cumulative high school or college Grade Point Average and plan to enroll full time in an accredited college or in an accredited vocational training program.



- **Christmas In April.** The Employees of MetCom participated in the 2019



Christmas in April event and teamed up with several other volunteers to perform such chores on the assigned home such as full roof replacement, driveway repairs, power washing and painting, rebuilt a kitchen cabinets, repaired a fallen ceiling, deck / stair repairs and yard work. This is the second year employees have participated and they plan to keep up the tradition. To learn more, or to volunteer with Christmas in April St. Mary's, visit their

website at [www.christmasinaprilsmc.org](http://www.christmasinaprilsmc.org).

- **Mary Lou Gough Food Pantry.** Every year MetCom employees choose a local charity to contribute to during the Christmas Season. Fundraising efforts and events are conducted throughout the year and end at the annual holiday pot-luck luncheon, which marks the completion of the fundraising efforts for MetCom's selected charity. This year's charity was the Mary Lou Gough Food Pantry. On December 19, 2019, MetCom employees invited, Dennis Cantwell, representative of the Food Pantry, to their annual luncheon, and presented him with a check in the amount of \$2,078.00, along with over 200 pounds of food. The Mary Lou Gough Food Pantry is administered by Our Lady of Wayside Parish, located in Chaptico, MD. To learn more, or to donate to, the Mary Lou Gough Food Pantry, visit their website at [www.olwrcc.org/pantry.php](http://www.olwrcc.org/pantry.php) or call 301-884-2502.



- **Children's National Medical Center of Washington.** Every year MetCom employees conduct a Toy Drive for Children's National Medical Center of Washington. The toys are delivered to the Medical Center on Christmas Eve by the two MetCom employees, George Warring and Mike Stroud (*pictured at left*), who organize and facilitate the drive. The toys are distributed to patients to help their stay feel more like home. For more



information on becoming involved in programs like this visit <https://childrensnational.org/giving/get-involved>.




- **Safety & Security Enhancements.** In addition to Blue tooth devices, back-up cameras were purchased and are being installed in all MetCom vehicles to help avert injury-causing and potentially fatal back over accidents by expanding the field of vision. They will also increase the driver's ability to see beyond the width of a mirror's image, help eliminate blind spots and assist the driver in parking more quickly and safely. A Birds Eye View Camera was purchased for the newly purchased Sewer Vacuum Truck (see *photo at right*) to further protect pedestrians, bicyclists, and avoid property damage. We are also transitioning to High Visibility Jackets for all Field personnel in an effort to increase the safety of our staff by making them readily visible to both drivers and operators of machinery. High Visibility Jackets utilize fluorescent colors that improve other's ability to see them in any situation.



- **Training.** Based upon OSHA's new Crane Rule, any crane operator must be certified when performing any work that is considered "construction" work, even when using mobile or carry deck cranes. MetCom sent three employees to Crane Operator training/certification and all three became certified and MetCom is in compliance with OSHA standards.
- **Infra-red Thermography.** As a part of a proactive risk management initiative, infra-red thermography was conducted randomly at several of our facilities to identify electrical hot spots that could pose a potential fire hazard. We are in the process of implementing an ongoing Preventive Maintenance (PM) Program using this technology to identify any potential issues which should help mitigate future losses due to faulty systems.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

- **Investing In Our Youth.** We have been working with the Board of Education, their Supervisor of K-12 Science, the President of St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair Board, and the Judge Coordinator to see if there was anything MetCom employees could do to assist in the upcoming FY 2020 Science and Engineering Fair competition which is planned to be held on January 25, 2020. As the public water and sewer supplier for St. Mary's County, we feel that being able to **volunteer** and participate in events like this is an integral part of our strategic plan to foster and build relationships within the community - not just with our water and sewer customers. The employees here at MetCom have such a wide variety of education and expertise in chemistry, biology, environmental / physical sciences, and water resources that we would definitely make **excellent** judges and project mentors.

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**Innovative Programs – Legislation.** Legislative text amendments to Chapter 113 of the Code of St. Mary's County were signed by Governor Hogan and became effective on October 1, 2018. The amendments will benefit the citizens of St. Mary's County and have provided the Metropolitan Commission with some additional flexibility and opportunity to better serve and expand its customer base. Three new pilot programs are now available: (1) The **Connection Incentive Program** provides assistance to owners of existing residential properties currently served by septic and/or well systems, with all or a portion of the costs of connecting to available public sewer and water systems; The **Capital Contribution Payment Deferral Program** provides some initial upfront cost relief and to help incentivize connections for residential and commercial property owners; and (3) The **Special Benefit Assessment Program** which is a voluntary capital funding mechanism that addresses the need for extending, expanding, and upgrading water and sewer systems to serve residential communities and individual properties that are currently not served.

For more information on these programs visit [www.metcom.org](http://www.metcom.org) and click on the Fiscal tab.

- Emergency Repair Assistance Program.** Many homeowners do not realize that damage to the service lines on their property is their responsibility to repair. Homeowners are often unaware that such repairs are not covered by basic homeowner's insurance policies or by the local. The Metropolitan Commission has partnered with (SLWA) to help eligible homeowners be prepared and have an option for service in the case of such an emergency. Service plans available through this partnership will provide homeowners and light commercial properties (*served by 1" service lines or less*) with an affordable, cost effective way to manage the unexpected expense and inconvenience of emergency in-home plumbing and external water / sewer line repairs leaks, breaks, and clogs. If a customer's line is in need of repair, a simple call to the SLWA 24-hour hotline will dispatch a local, licensed contractor. There are no service fees or deductibles. This program is **voluntary** for residents and provided at no cost to the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission and no public funds are used to promote or administer the program. As of July 1, 2019, there were 1,151 residents with 2,107 active warranty policies.

SLWA will also set aside funds to help low income homeowners through a simple on line application process that can be reviewed at <https://www.HomeServeCares.com>.

- Marketing & Branding.** As a part of our branding, in addition to MetCom's official logo, the Commission adopted a mascot. Aquia the Water drop was selected based on based on: originality, creativity, relevance to MetCom and appropriateness for the target audience.



- Risk & Resiliency Assessment.** On October 23, 2018, America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA) was signed into law. Section 2013 of the Act requires community water systems that serve more than 3,300 people to complete a Risk and Resilience Assessment (RRA) and develop an Emergency Response Plan (ERP). The Metropolitan Commission will be required to comply with this new law and be certified to the U.S. EPA by June 30, 2021. The RRA includes a comprehensive evaluation of risk to the system from natural hazards and malevolent acts (*i.e., all hazards*); resilience of water facility infrastructure (*including pipes, physical barriers, water sources and collection, treatment, storage and distribution, and electronic, computer and other automated systems*); monitoring practices; financial infrastructure and systems (*i.e. billing systems*); chemical storage and handling; operation and maintenance.
- Adopt-A-Road.** The Metropolitan Commission has partnered with the County's Department of Public Works & Transportation and formally adopted the section of FDR (*Franklin Delano Roosevelt*) Boulevard between MD Route 4 and First Colony Boulevard. The Department of Public Works & Transportation provides vests, litter "getters" and trash bags for cleaning up roadside litter. The existence of unsightly litter, garbage, posters, advertisements and other refuse along roadways detracts from the scenic and rural character of St. Mary's County. On May 4, 2019 MetCom employees conducted its first litter pick-up event. By our participation in the St. Mary's County Adopt-A-Road program we will be setting an example to others about the importance of maintaining a healthy and attractive environment. The cleanup along FDR Boulevard is our small part at trying to "Help Keep St. Mary's County Clean". To find out how to become involved in this environmentally conscious effort visit <http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/dpw/adoptaroad.asp>.



## FISCAL YEAR 2020 PLANS & OBJECTIVES

### OPERATIONS

Continue with technology upgrades and rehabilitation projects to sustain reliability and environmental protection, which include:

- ❖ Purchase a new auto analyzer for the wastewater laboratory to assist with various wastewater permit compliance testing.
- ❖ Ensure reliability at our remote pumping and treatment facilities by replacing three (3) aged generators with new units equipped with the latest technology.

- ❖ Remove and abate remaining asbestos mufflers at wastewater collection facilities.
- ❖ Replace fencing at the Airedale Road treatment facility and the Pegg Road water station.
- ❖ Continue third-party inspections of water storage tanks, in order to identify and plan for water storage tank rehabilitation projects.
- ❖ Maintain the sewer manhole and gravity sewer main rehabilitation projects.
- ❖ Replace the current Inflow and Infiltration inspection van with a newer, larger vehicle.
- ❖ Develop and implement Water Use Regulations (WURs).
- ❖ Demolish and remove the existing pole barn at the St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Facility.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

This past year has seen an abundance of growth regarding our information technology systems and we look forward to the following projects in FY 2020:

- ❖ Replace all firewalls with upgraded units to address the need for increased security. Existing units are nearing capacity to accept new services.
- ❖ Upgrade audio visual (A/V) equipment in Commission conference room and auxiliary meeting rooms to include removal of old style overhead projectors and replacement by big screen monitors/televisions.
- ❖ Purchase and install new phone system that will provide more integration with computer systems and network.
- ❖ Replace several SCADA radios with high speed models to lower polling time to help ensure expeditious notifications to system needs.
- ❖ Add additional AT&T VPN licenses for secure remote access for employees working in the field or at home.
- ❖ Replace aging servers with more powerful Dell Optiplex R730 models.
- ❖ Replace aging Laptops with new Dell Latitude 3590 units for field staff.

## FISCAL

- ❖ Find new and unique methods of reducing the receivables during the annual tax sale for delinquent properties
- ❖ Monitor the Procurement Policies and Procedures of the Local County Government, and other professional organizations for changes and updates in



procurement law and update the Procurement Manual accordingly.

- ❖ Continue to make progress towards the unfunded OPEB liability, through the annual budget process.
- ❖ Evaluate additional and unique payment methods for the customers of MetCom.
- ❖ Consider adopting the State of Maryland electronic deed recording system “Simplifile”. It is not mandatory, but FY 2020 will hopefully reflect a more efficient change of customer and final billing process.
- ❖ Present, the Board the option to adopt a reduced rate of increase in MetCom rates and charges over the next five year period as identified in the FY 2019 Rate Study addendum. The rate of increase will be a point of discussion during the annual budget process.
- ❖ Evaluate the feasibility of implementing Round-Up Programs in which rate payers may donate to a fund to be used to provide payment assistance to homeowners as a part of paying their MetCom bills.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- ❖ Transition to a completely tobacco free workplace in January 2020. With the adoption of the new Personnel Manual, the Metropolitan Commission will transition The tobacco free workplace will create a safer and healthier workplace, reduce health care costs, decrease absenteeism due to tobacco related illness, and increase employees’ and the company’s productivity due to less smoke breaks. Cessation classes and techniques will be encouraged in an effort to inspire tobacco users to quit.



## ADMINISTRATION

- ❖ Complete the Risk & Resiliency Assessment for certification
- ❖ Submit new legislation to amend Chapter 113
- ❖ Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Commission
- ❖ Continue to draw down on prior approved DHCD loans
- ❖ Implement an Adopt-A-Hydrant program endorsed by the Fire Chiefs
- ❖ Develop a multi-year Vehicle Replacement Program

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- ❖ Close out the **Piney Point Water System** project which will have replaced over 3,200 linear feet of waterline and approximately 2,500 linear feet of new water main.
- ❖ Complete the design for the partial replacement of the **Piney Point Wastewater Pumping Station** originally built in 1987.
- ❖ Complete construction of the **Great Mills Wastewater Pumping Station Upgrade**. The Notice To Proceed was August 28, 2018.
- ❖ Bid, award, and begin construction of the **Hickory Hills Water Storage Tower & Well**. The original 1992 water storage tower will be replaced with a new 2 million gallon facility to serve the greater Lexington Park water system.
- ❖ Finalize the design of **FDR Boulevard Phases 3A and 3B** which will include the installation of approximately 9,750 linear feet of new waterline between MD 237 and Pegg Road. Construction funding: FY 2019 and FY 2020.
- ❖ Complete construction of the **Pine Hill Run Interceptor Sewer Rehabilitation** which is located along Pine Hill Run Road adjacent to the Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility (MTWRF).
- ❖ Complete the construction / close-out of Phase 1 and the design of Phase 2 of the **St. Clements Shores Water System Replacement**
- ❖ Obtain planning approval and begin the design for the **St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade** to provide additional disposal capacity and increase the Plant's flow.
- ❖ Finalize the design and award the construction of the first phase of the **Town Creek Water System** which will increase the size of the 2-inch diameter lines built in the 1950's to 8-inch diameter.
- ❖ Complete construction of the replacement of **Hunting Quarter Well #1** which unexpectedly failed in July 2017.
- ❖ Begin the construction of the **King Kennedy Water System Replacement** which will add a second production well (10-inch) and connection to the existing water system that serves the King Kennedy sub-division.
- ❖ Finalize the **Energy Audit** to determine if there are any operational efficiencies / cost savings by upgrading and/or replacing conventional electrical equipment with more energy-efficient equipment.
- ❖ Prepare a **Facilities Conditions Assessment** to evaluate the age and condition of all existing facilities in the 5th and 8th Sanitary Districts and provide guidance for future capital improvement projects.

## SUMMARY OF FY 2019 STATISTICS AND DATA

<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>
Replacement Value of Facilities ( <i>i.e. plants and stations</i> )	\$118.3M
Sewage Treatment Plants ( <i>owned &amp; operated</i> )	7
Sewage Pumping Stations	65
Residential Grinder Pumps	1,786
Miles of Gravity Sewer Line	164
Miles of Sewer Force Main	123
Age of Sewer Lines / Mains < 25, 25-50, > 50 years	43%/49%/8%
Sewer Customers ( <i>connected &amp; unconnected</i> )	15,431
New Sewer EDUs	190
Gallons Wastewater Conveyed / Treated	1.14 / 1.60 Billion
Water Systems	28
Well Sites / Water Pumping Stations	67/55
Water Towers ( <i>elevated / ground storage</i> )	17/37
Miles of Water Lines / Mains	257
Manholes	3,800
Age of Water Lines / Mains < 25, 25-50, > 50 years	52%/38%/10%
Water Meters	15,655
Water Customers ( <i>connected &amp; unconnected</i> )	16,056
New Water EDUs	141
Gallons Water Supplied	1.29 Billion
Emergency Generators	90
Fire Hydrants	2,669
MDE Permits	
Water / Sewer	43 / 5
Full Time Employees ( <i>funded</i> )	96
Plans Reviewed	
Capital Project Review	57
Development Review	209
Plat Review	38
Connection Permits Issued ( <i>water &amp; sewer</i> )	196





# The Metropolitan Commission

**WE ARE.....**

**M***otivated*

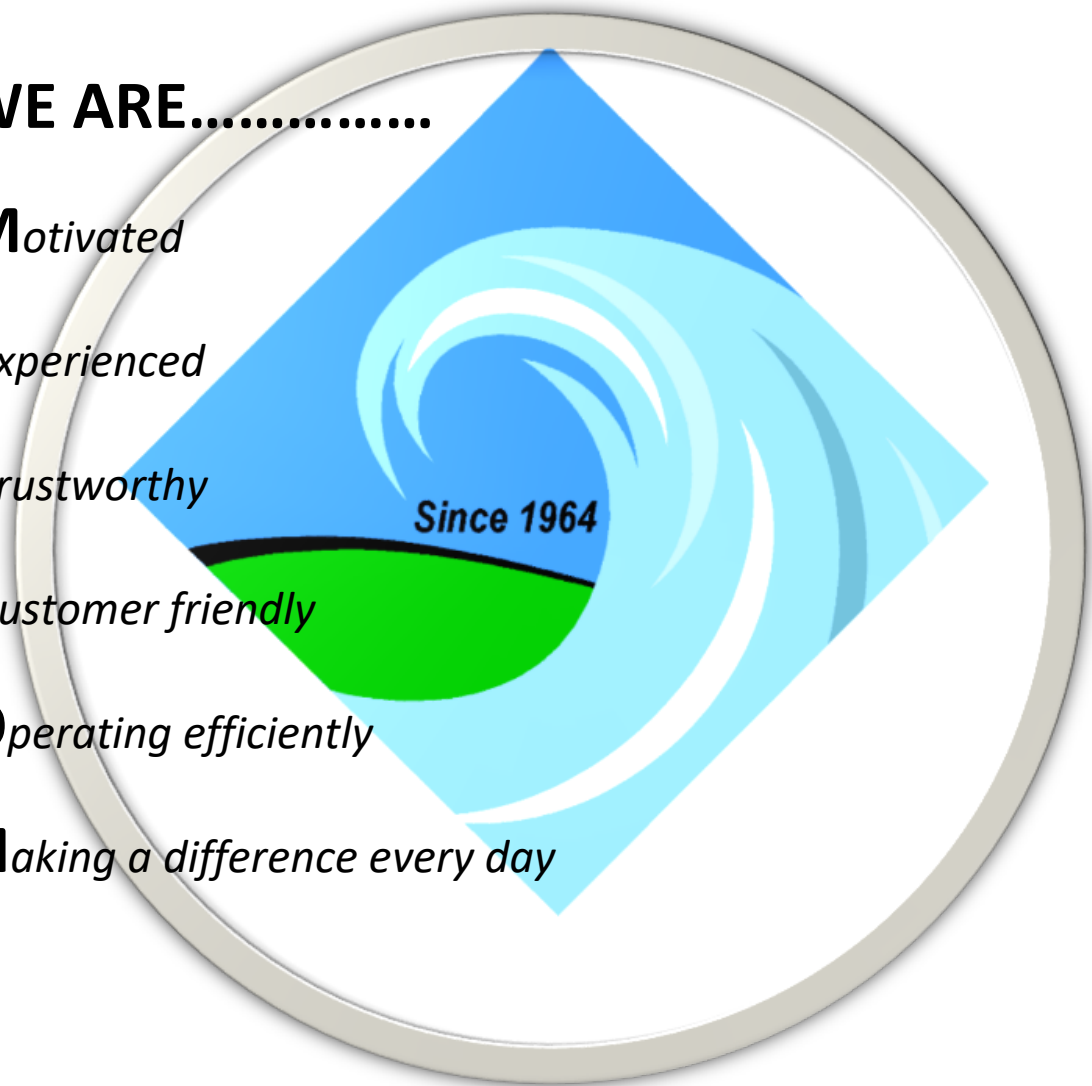
**E***xperienced*

**T***rustworthy*

**C***ustomer friendly*

**O***perating efficiently*

**M***aking a difference every day*



***“Community First”***