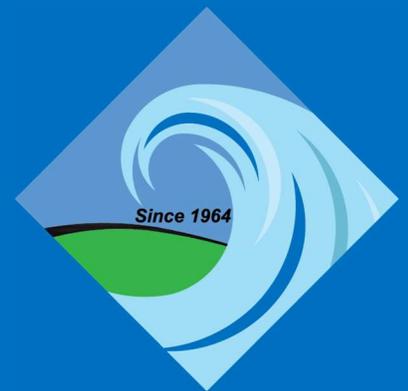




ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
METROPOLITAN  
COMMISSION

# ANNUAL REPORT



**FISCAL  
YEAR 2022**

REPORTING PERIOD:

JULY 1, 2021 TO  
JUNE 30, 2022

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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: substantial completion of the Hickory Hills Elevated Water Storage Tower; completion of the Pine Hill Run Interceptor force main; close-out of the Great Mills Wastewater Pump Station (*the largest in MetCom's inventory*); Patuxent Park Rehabilitation sewer replacement; continued planning approvals for the St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade to ENR treatment standards; and continued joint projects with the County's Department of Public Works & Transportation. You will read about these and other efforts throughout the following pages of this Report.

Other non-capital accomplishments in FY 2022 included: accepting the 2022 Innovation Award for our COVID-19 wastewater monitoring initiative; providing bill paying assistance for low income customers; lowering the rate of increase in usage charges by almost 11% for third consecutive year; completing a Facilities Plan to guide infrastructure renewal for the next twenty (20) years; achieving our Debt Policy performance measures; taking advantage of lower interest rates and refinancing prior loans; receiving the highest rating on the audit of our financial statements; obtaining legislative approval to decouple debt from the County government; celebrating numerous in-house promotions; developing new joint agreements with fellow stakeholders; evaluating staffing / space needs for future growth and most importantly, maintaining our rigorous operations, maintenance, testing, risk management, training, and development review programs.

Having been faced with the on-going COVID-19 global pandemic, the MetCom management team has taken the necessary proactive steps to ensure the health of its employees and the community in which we serve.

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!"***

*George A. Erichsen*

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: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Telephone: (301) 737-7400 / Website: <https://www.metcom.org> / Facebook: @SMCMetCoM



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: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:30 am to 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Telephone: (301) 737-7400 / Website: <https://www.metcom.org> / Facebook: @SMCMetCoM

# 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. Learn more about us at <https://www.metcom.org/about-us>.

The Board Members during FY 2022, ending June 30, 2022, were:

### **Commissioners**

Gerald Meyerman  
*1<sup>st</sup> Election District*

Roy H. Alvey  
*2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Election Districts*

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

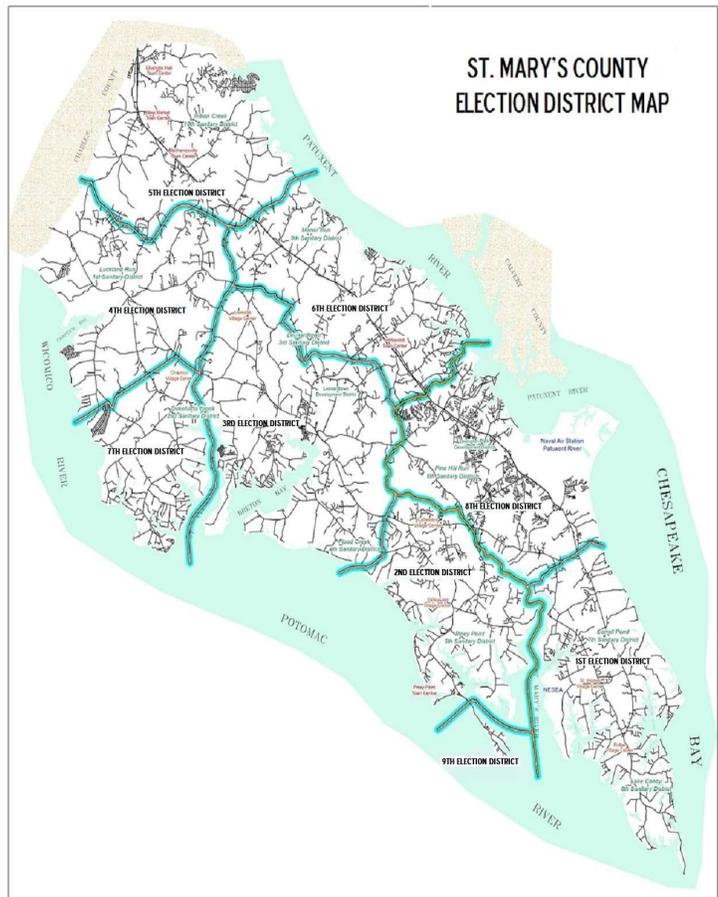
Dale Antosh  
*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Election Districts*

Keith Dugan  
*6<sup>th</sup> Election District*

Robert A. Russell  
*7<sup>th</sup> Election District*

Rudolph K. Fairfax, Vice-Chairman  
*8<sup>th</sup> Election District*

Captain John Barbrazon  
*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  
Edward Hogan, Chief of Facilities and Operations  
Anne Mary B. Cullins, P.H.R., SHRM-CP, Director of Human Resources  
James “Rick” Harding, 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*) Patricia Stiegman, George A. Erichsen, P.E. and Anne Mary B. Cullins, *P.H.R., SHRM-CP*; (*back row*) M. Christy Hollander, P.E, Edward Hogan and James “Rick” Harding

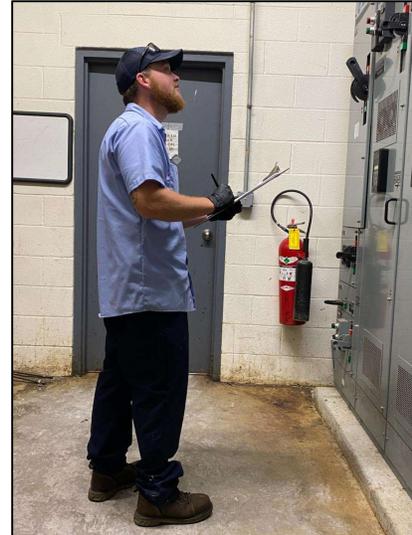
### **While fulfilling our corporate vision, we strive to:**

- Be responsible and accountable to the County's citizens;
- Provide high quality, cost effective and efficient services;
- Preserve the County's environment, heritage, and rural character; and
- Foster opportunities for present and future generations.

# FACILITIES OVERVIEW

## WASTEWATER FACILITIES

The Metropolitan Commission owns or operates 7 wastewater treatment plants in the county, treating a combined flow of approximately 1.60 billion gallons a year. The largest advanced wastewater treatment facility is the Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation facility, which was first constructed in the late 1960's. By utilizing state of the art treatment technologies, the plant is able to treat an average daily wastewater flow of 3.5 million gallons. The Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility serves a majority of MetCom's wastewater customers. Other treatment facilities serve Wicomico Shores, St. Clements Shores, Airedale Road, the Forrest Farms neighborhood and parts of Charlotte Hall. All facilities are permitted through the Maryland Department of the Environment and are operated by licensed Operators.



*Staff is available day and night, 24/7 to respond to customer service issues.*

## WATER DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES

The Commission operates 28 different water systems throughout the County, delivering drinking water to over 16,000 customers. The public water system is comprised of over

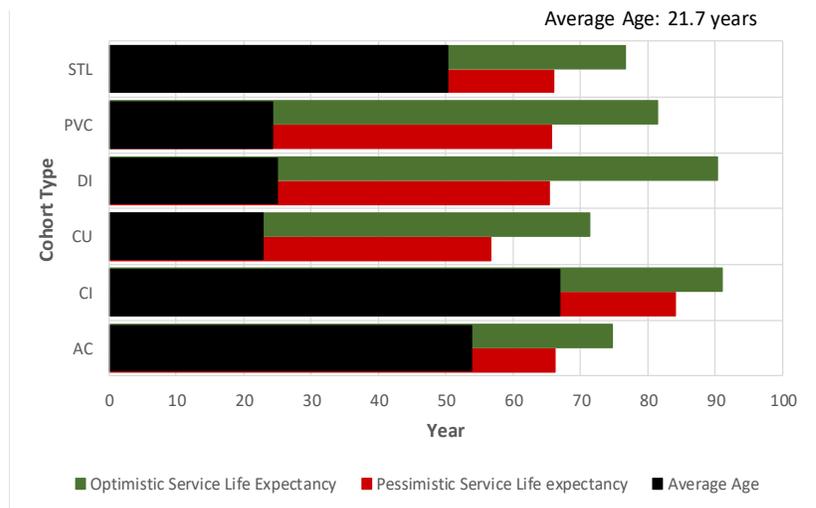


*Laboratory staff preparing a sample for analysis.*

250 miles of water distribution lines (*ranging in size from 3/4 inch all the way up to 16 inches*) and over 15,000 water meters. Each water system had state issued Appropriations Permits. These Permits are effective for a ten-year period and have withdrawal allocations granted that limits the amount of water that is withdrawn from each well. The allocations are limited in two ways; a daily average (*based on a yearly average*) and daily maximum average (*based on the month of maximum use*). The water systems include 52 water well sites, 55 water pumping stations and 18 water towers. All public water systems that the Commission operate draws water from wells of various size (6" to 12") and depths (350' to 1,020'). Source water is pulled from the Aquifer and Upper Patapsco aquifers. Our laboratory performs over 25,000 analytical tests a year. These range from nutrient testing to fecal coliform sampling.

## OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The sanitary sewer system watershed is comprised of 10 Sanitary Sewer District drainage basins. The structural integrity, reliability and overall performance of the conveyance and treatment systems has considerable ramifications to the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay water shed, the largest estuary in the world. The sanitary sewer collection and conveyance system consists of approximately 290 miles of gravity and pressure sanitary sewer lines and 66 wastewater pumping stations servicing various neighborhoods. Within the system, there are 167 miles of gravity line and 124 miles of pressure main, 3,700 manholes and 1,800 grinder pumps. The average age for all the pipes in the sewer force main’s service system is 27.7 years and 31.3 years in the sewer gravity main system. The average age for all the pipes in the water service system is 21.7 years (see figure below). There are no combined stormwater and sanitary sewers in our system. The gravity sewer mains range in size from 6 inches to 42 inches and vary in depth from 2 feet to over 30 feet. The materials used include vitrified clay pipe, transite pipe and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe. As new sewer infrastructure is being added, all information is updated within our GIS system.



## LABORATORIES

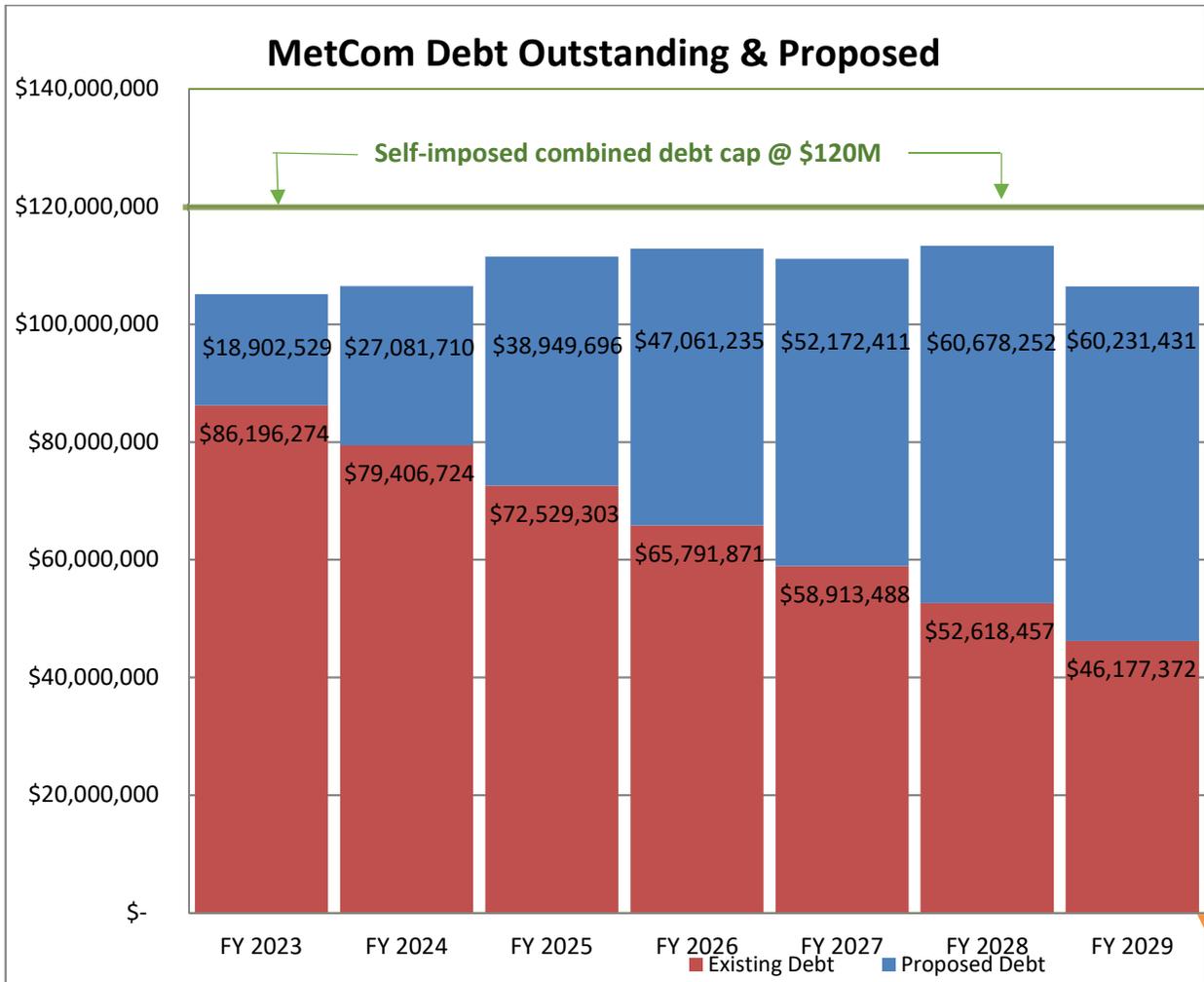
Drinking water samples are collected and analyzed for compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. MetCom maintains a Maryland Department of the Environment state certified drinking water laboratory where over 1,000 samples per year are analyzed for bacteria (*coliform*) levels by in-house operations staff. A third party laboratory also collects over 300 samples per year and tests water quality parameters such as; arsenic, lead / copper (*triennially*), pH, fluoride, nitrates, metals and disinfection byproducts.

In addition to drinking water sampling, over 25,500 wastewater analyses are conducted in our state-of-the-art wastewater laboratory for each of the seven (7) wastewater treatment plants that MetCom either owns or operates to determine compliance with the federal Clean Water Act. 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*), biochemical 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 help ensure the quality of the effluent being released into receiving surface waters.

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND USER CHARGES

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

MetCom is retiring its debt at between \$6.5M to \$6.9M per year. Since the FY 2018 budget cycle, the Commission has 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. 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 2023 - 2028, well below the legal debt limit of 25%. In addition, legislation was passed under House Bill 862, which included the decoupling of Metropolitan Commission’s debt from the debt of the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County (see page 30 for more information).



**NOTE:** The debt incurred by the Commission to fund its water and sewer infrastructure improvement projects is derived primarily from financial assistance in the form of low interest loans secured from two sources: The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Maryland Water Quality Financing Administration (WQFA).

## FY 2022 AUDIT

Each year, the Metropolitan Commission is audited by an independent third party. In FY 2022, it was the opinion of SB & Company, LLC, that the MetCom financial statements were presented fairly in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. MetCom received an unmodified opinion, which is the highest rating attainable. The financial highlights from the Report are shown below:

- ✓ MetCom's total net position increased by \$6 million and \$3.1 million, or 4.6% and 2.4%, as a result of operations in FY 2022 and 2021, respectively.
- ✓ During the current year, MetCom's revenue from operations was \$16.5 million, representing an increase of 2.0% over the prior year. The current year increase is mostly due to an increase in rates, increase in usage, and new customers.
- ✓ MetCom's operating expenses excluding depreciation were \$15.1million during FY 2022 and \$15.4 million in FY 2021.
- ✓ Depreciation Expense totaled \$6.5 million and \$6.6 million for the years ending June 30, 2022, and 2021.
- ✓ MetCom's non-operating revenue was \$8.7 million for the years ending June 30, 2022, and 2021, respectively. The decrease of 1% was a result of a decrease in debt service charges, and a decrease in interest expenses. FY 2021 decreased by 14% as a result of a decrease in interest income and an increase in interest expense.



To review audited Financial Statements from FY 2012-FY 2022 please visit the Financial Report section of our website at <https://www.metcom.org/financial-reports>.

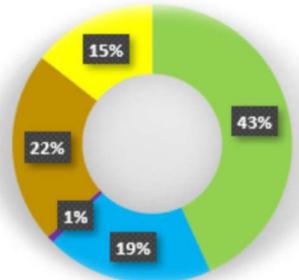
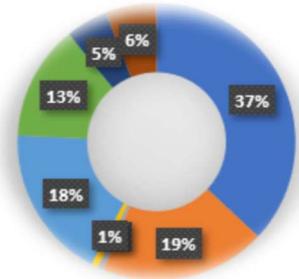
## CUSTOMER BILL PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

In April, the Commission entered into a partnership with the Department of Human Services to help residents offset the costs of their public water and wastewater bills. The federally-funded Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) offers eligible households up to \$2,000 in assistance, focusing on those households whose drinking water and wastewater bills are 30 days or more past due. According to the program guidelines, renters are also eligible, if they are responsible for paying a water/wastewater bill or their water/wastewater is included in their rent.

## FY 2022 BUDGET

<u>Income</u>	
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Sewer Income	\$10,709,196
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Water Income	5,653,723
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Engineering Income	141,815
<span style="color: white;">■</span> Other Income	246,795
<span style="color: olive;">■</span> Sewer System Improvement Charges	5,160,783
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> Water System Improvement Charges	3,800,782
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Sewer Capital Contribution Charges	1,164,042
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Water Capital Contribution Charges	1,125,469
<b>Total Budget Income</b>	<b>\$27,902,605</b>
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Sewer Expenses	\$10,432,482
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Water Expenses	4,557,420
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Engineering Expense	141,815
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Debt Service Sewer	6,324,825
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Debt Service Water	4,826,251
<b>Total Budget Expenses</b>	<b>\$26,282,793</b>
<b>Income Allocated To Reserves</b>	<b>\$ 1,619,812</b>

### FY22 Audited Actuals



## 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 and Sewer Service Rates for Fiscal Year 2022 were:

<b>Sewer Service Rates</b>		<b>FY 22 Rates</b>
<b>Sewer</b>		
Non-metered per EDU per Month		\$ 44.37
Metered Rate 5/8"		\$ 18.81
Metered Rate 1"		\$ 47.03
Metered Rate 1-1/2"		\$ 94.04
Metered Rate 2"		\$ 150.48
Metered Rate 3"		\$ 300.92
Metered Rate 4"		\$ 470.20
Metered Rate 6"		\$ 940.42
Metered Rate 8"		\$ 1,504.64
Metered Rate 10"		\$ 2,164.06
Usage Rate per 1,000 Gallons	*	\$ 5.11 *
* 5/8" Meter Residential Use Capped at 10,000 Gallons/Month		
Navy (per 1,000 gallons)		\$ 3.73
<b>Septage Hauler Rates per 1,000 Gallons</b>		
Holding Tank Waste		\$ 16.81
Septic Tank Waste		\$ 71.80
Portable Toilet Waste		\$ 90.49
Grease Trap Waste		\$ 142.26
<b>Water Service Rates</b>		<b>FY 22 Rates</b>
<b>Water</b>		
Non-Metered per EDU/Month		\$ 18.73
Metered Rate 5/8"		\$ 9.87
Metered Rate 1"		\$ 24.67
Metered Rate 1-1/2"		\$ 49.32
Metered Rate 2"		\$ 78.90
Metered Rate 3"		\$ 157.82
Metered Rate 4"		\$ 246.58
Metered Rate 6"		\$ 493.18
Metered Rate 8"		\$ 789.07
Metered Rate 10"		\$ 1,134.31
Water Usage Rate per 1,000 Gallons		Tiered
Water Usage Rate - Tier 1		\$ 1.78
Water Usage Rate - Tier 2		\$ 3.54
Water Usage Rate - Tier 3		\$ 7.10
Irrigation Usage Rate per 1,000 Gallons		Tiered
Water Usage Rate - Tier 1		\$ 3.54
Water Usage Rate - Tier 2		\$ 7.10
Hydrant Meter Rate per 1,000 Gallons		\$ 3.54

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. Reserves have been designated to partially subsidize our rates in order to help maintain reasonable levels for our customers.

The approved System Improvement Charges for FY 2022 were:

<u>Water:</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>
Residential / EDU / month	\$ 12.48
Commercial / EDU / month	\$ 14.98
<u>Sewer:</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>
Residential / EDU / month	\$ 15.39
Commercial / EDU / month	\$ 18.47

STABILIZING RATES

Due to sound capital project management and fiscal practices, charges were able to be maintained at the prior approved FY 2020 levels. Reserves were utilized to help sustain these charges at their current levels.

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 2022 were:

<u>Water:</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>
Residential / EDU / Connection	\$ 10,955.87
Commercial / EDU / Connection	\$ 13,147.04
<u>Sewer:</u>	<u>FY 2022</u>
Residential / EDU / Connection	\$ 6,941.21
Commercial / EDU / Connection	\$ 8,329.44

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Charges were able to be maintained at the prior approved FY 2020 levels, which provides affordability and predictability. Customers may now defer 50% of this charge for new sewer connections.

In addition to the above-referenced charges, **Bay Restoration Fees** are also collected at a rate of \$5.00 per month 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 / plat / easement reviews, capital project design and construction management, emergency facility repairs, maintenance of the Commission's Design Manual and Specifications, along with the maintenance of MetCom's GIS infrastructure database. General GIS information is available through the County's GIS mapping tool that is available to the public at [www.stmarysmd.com/it/gis/](http://www.stmarysmd.com/it/gis/).

The Department evaluates new and redevelopment projects submitted for connection to the public water and sewer systems as part of the County's Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) review process. In order to protect the integrity of the water and sewer systems, projects must comply with all applicable rules, regulations and standards including the Commission's Design Manual.



This year, approximately 282 development plans and plats were reviewed, ranging from large-scale capital projects to small, single-family homes. Additionally, developer projects are routinely monitored and inspected by staff. Approximately \$8.0M in surety bonds remained in place during FY 2022 to ensure contract completion in the event of an unforeseen contractor default.

The Engineering Department also manages capital improvement projects funded as a part of the multi-year Capital Improvement Budget and Plan (CIB/CIP). This includes budget formulation, estimating, planning, scheduling, design management, permitting, land acquisition, construction management, inspection services, and providing technical assistance on grants and loans. The approved FY 2022 Capital Improvement Budget included funding for six (6) water and eight (10) sewer projects budgeted at \$3,378,947 and \$8,669,415, respectively along with the continuation of several prior approved projects.



These projects include treatment plan upgrades/expansions, wastewater pump station replacements, sewer main rehabilitation, water line replacements and water storage tanks/towers which will better serve our customers with reliable water and sewer services.

In addition, the Construction Division performs cost effective maintenance work and emergency repairs by engaging in-house staff. The department also manages the Emergency Repair and Scheduled Maintenance contract which is utilized for scheduled repair work and emergency maintenance calls. The Construction Division is a vital part of the Engineering Department and helps fulfill the mission of the Commission.

# 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 2022, the Human Resources Department:

- Received and processed 524 applications;
- Posted 155 employment notices;
- Filled 26 vacant positions; and

## STAFFING

As of June 30, 2022, MetCom employed 94 employees and one (1) contract employee, as follows:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Full Time	66	28
Part Time	0	0
Intern	0	0
<u>Contract</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>29</b>

## INTERNAL PROMOTIONS

MetCom has a long history of attracting and retaining a talented and diverse workforce. We are proud of our team and their dedication to both the Commission and our customers. Last year, we were able to promote fourteen (14) employees from within the organization.

As of June 30, 2022, MetCom’s employees, classified by years of service, was as follows, with 62% serving nine (9) years or less with the Commission:

<u>Service Years</u>	<u># Employees</u>
30+ years	4
25-29 years	6
20-24 years	7
15-19 years	7
10-14 years	12
5-9 years	14
<5 years	44



*Length of Service Award recipients are recognized by the Commissioners and their co-workers at our Board meetings.*



## BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

The Human Resources staff attended several virtual seminars, and online-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</li> <li>• Retirement Counseling Sessions</li> <li>• 4 Retirements</li> <li>• 6 Worker's Compensation Claims</li> <li>• 19 Family Medical Leave Applications</li> <li>• Open Enrollment Information Session</li> <li>• Flu Shots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 79% of employees participate in MetCom's medical insurance</li> <li>• 82% of employees participate in MetCom's dental insurance</li> <li>• 80% of employees participate in MetCom's vision insurance</li> <li>• 46% of employees participate in the 457B Retirement Plan</li> <li>• 48% of employees are enrolled in the Short Term Disability</li> <li>• 37% of employees have additional life insurance</li> <li>• 17% of employees have ancillary insurance (AFLAC)</li> <li>• 4 employee participates the Tuition Reimbursement Program</li> <li>• 37% 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's training program has returned to preCovid-19 status with an aggressive training program that includes in-house, virtual, and external in-person training. 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. HR further tracks all Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL's) and physicals associated with such licenses. We currently have 21 employees who hold a CDL license.



*MetCom currently has 36 licensed employees, with 67 individual licenses and certifications, including competent climber / rescue.*



*OSHA Confined Space training helps remind staff to remain vigilant.*

MetCom participates in the new CDL clearinghouse mandated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

As of June 30, 2022, MetCom had three (3) Professional Engineers on staff, one (1) Professional Human Resources and (2) Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) – Certified Professionals, and two (2) Certified Professional Public Buyers. In Fiscal Year 2022, employees participated in a total of 98 safety classes and received 2,542 hours of training.



*Employees participating in CPR Training*

## 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. In the past few years because of COVID-19, MetCom made a safety-conscious decision not to employ any interns. However, this fiscal year, we plan on resuming this program. This program is beneficial to both the students and the Metropolitan Commission. Over the years we have hired ten (10) interns into full-time employment.

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.

## QUALITY ON TAP AWARD

On behalf of the Commission, the Executive Director awarded the 2022 Quality on Tap Award to the Construction Division in appreciation and recognition of their outstanding service, dedication to duty, and level of commitment to the organization. *“Donnie Tinsley and his crew have set a standard of excellence that is a direct reflection of their professionalism and is in keeping with the highest traditions of MetCom.”*



## 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 2021, there were six (6) work related injuries reported with workers' compensation claims totaling \$27,142 and eleven (99) lost workdays.

The HR Director and the Safety Officer also coordinate MetCom's Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, 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.



*Staff participates in a variety of training programs.*

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW

The Information Technology (IT) Department promotes effective stewardship of information assets and provides a secure, highly reliable technology infrastructure for supporting the diverse needs of the Commission. From providing email and communication services to maintaining data storage and file access controls to securing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems, IT touches all facets of the Water and Wastewater sector.

IT maintains an interconnected, county-wide network comprised of four (4) main sites. The department is responsible for governance of the Commission's technological systems, maintenance of the infrastructure, technical support, and functionality of the systems overall. These systems include: Data Flow Systems (DFS) SCADA, AVEVA Solutions SCADA, Edmunds Govtech's enterprise resource planning, Cityworks public asset management, ArcGIS geographic information system mapping, Neptune's N\_Sight meter reading, Laserfiche document retention and archiving, and many others.

In 2022, the IT department faced an increasing need for improved cyber security measures; as "attacks" are on the rise. Partnering with security experts from the Department of Homeland Security, JSCM Group, Watchguard Technologies, Jacobs, and the St. Mary's County IT Department, the Commission has increased its cybersecurity posture through remote penetration testing, training, better hardware, and increased systems monitoring.



# FISCAL YEAR 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Hickory Hills Water Tower and Well.** The construction of the new 2,000,000-gallon composite water tower to replace the existing 500,000-gallon tower is well underway. This tower and well will balance the demands on the Lexington Park distribution system. The new 700 gallon per minute well has been approved for drilling into the Patapsco Aquifer. Both are expected to be completed in the Spring 2023.

It is anticipated that the existing tower will be demolished in the Fall of 2022. To view a time lapse video of the construction progress, visit our website at <https://www.metcom.org/hickoryhillspggress>.



- **St. Clements Shores Water Rehabilitation Phase 2.** The second and final phase of the water system replacement project in the St. Clements Shores community is underway. This phase of the project includes the replacement of approximately 10,000 linear feet of water line, 16 fire hydrants and associated appurtenances for approximately 230 of our customers. The galvanized water pipe system is beyond its useful life expectancy of 50 years.

The project will replace a system that does not meet current specifications, improve the reliability of a system that is frequently under repair, supply fire flow in areas not currently served, and provide water meters to enhance customer billing. The new mains will be installed in the existing County-maintained right-of-ways which will limit the number of easements that would normally be required.

Construction is underway and should be completed in the Spring of 2023.



*Installation of new water lines by MetCom's contractor.*

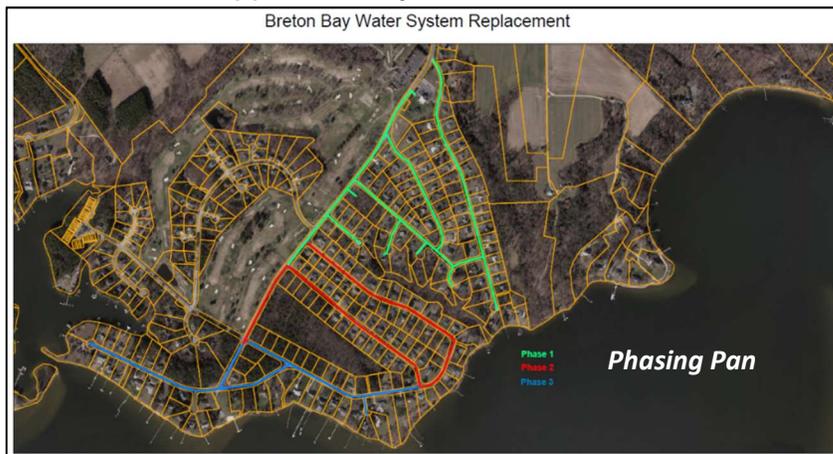
- **King Kennedy Water System Replacement .** A new ground storage tank and booster station will provide a more reliable water system for the Loveville Acres and King & Kennedy Estates residential developments. This project includes a new precast concrete building with controls and water booster pumps; emergency generator; a new, 40,000-gallon glass-lined, ground storage tank; an 8,000-gallon hydropneumatic tank, and upgrade to 3-phase electrical service. The design is nearing completion and the construction invitation to bid is scheduled to be advertised in the Fall of 2022.

- Marlay-Taylor Secondary Clarifier #1 Replacement.** One (1) of the four (4) existing clarifier tanks, (*originally built in 1967*) at the Water Reclamation Facility became non-operational and had to be taken out of service. Fortunately, the use of the remaining secondary clarifiers has been able to be rotated, to avoid a shutdown of the Facility. The use of all the clarifiers is very important operationally as it allows the Commission to handle larger than normal inflows resulting from major weather events by helping maintain suspended solids (SS), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and nitrogen levels. On January 5, 2022, bids were opened for the construction contract to replace this clarifier. Demolition on the existing tanks has begun and construction of the new tank is scheduled to be completed in the Spring / Summer of 2023.



*Demolition of the existing clarifier tank.*

- Breton Bay Water System Replacement.** Phase 1 of the three-phase water system replacement of the Breton Bay Water System is currently under design. The entire project will replace the water system originally built in the 1960s and includes; installation of approximately 20,000 linear feet of 8" water mains and new fire hydrants. Phase 1



(*shown on green at left*) includes Potomac View Drive, Spring House Lane, Meadow Drive, Meadow Court, Lake Circle, Meadow Way, Center 40 Circle, and Society Hill Drive from Potomac View Drive to South 40 Drive.

- Facilities Plan.** A study to analyzes the water and sewer systems in terms of their capacity and ability to provide service to current and future customers of the Commission is almost completed. It will: deliver additional water and wastewater capacity that is strategically timed to meet future MetCom's needs through the next 20 years; develop a flexible Facility Plan and prioritized implementation plan that documents the near-term and long-range water and wastewater facility needs; provide modeling and geographic information system (GIS) tools that allow MetCom to be responsive to changes in growth projections and developer requests; and meet the County's future needs in accordance with the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan.

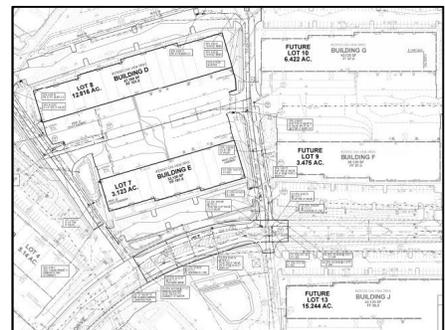
## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

- **Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) Table Update.** The updated EDU table was approved and adopted on May 1, 2022 and will be used to calculate anticipated flow for all new development connecting to the public water and/or sewer system. EDU's are used for billing and design purposes. Updates included several uses that were not specifically listed in the EDU Table (i.e. airport hangars, campgrounds, colleges / universities, fire departments / rescue squads, salons/spas, animal shelters, bed & breakfasts, manufacturing, museums, public restrooms, gyms / health clubs, etc.) which will help streamline the review process and provide clear guidance to applicants and can be found on the MetCom website at <https://www.metcom.org/engineering>.
- **Capacity Availability at Marlay-Taylor.** The MTWRF is currently permitted at 6MDG (24,000 EDUs). On paper, the remaining capacity as tracked by the County's Department of Land Use & Growth Management is only 600 EDUs. In order to ensure additional capacity for growth is available in the near term, MetCom submitted a flow capacity analysis to the Maryland Department of the Environment to reconcile existing flow rates with capacity reservations in place for the St. Mary's College and Pax River NAS. If approved, the available remaining capacity available for development could be increased to an estimated 1,200 EDUs. This would be a great achievement for MetCom and allow additional EDUs to be allocated and to also prevent a costly, unnecessary and premature expansion of the facility. Concurrence from the State is expected in the Fall of 2022.

- **Woods at Myrtle Point - Section 3.** The design, development review and permitting processes are almost complete. Once constructed, Section 3 (*shown at right*) will provide 132 new townhome customers for the Commission and will include minor design upgrades to the receiving wastewater pump station.



- **Oak Crest Center.** St. Johns Property is expanding their property with new site plans for an additional 5 flex space buildings in the rear of the property (*shown at right*). A site visit completed by Engineering and Operations Departments determined that the existing infrastructure at the permanent pump station was potentially below the 100-year water surface elevation of the stormwater management facilities. As such, the final design will ensure that the station does not become inundated with stormwater during an intense storm event.



## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

**Maryland Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network. (WARN)** The Commission executed a mutual aid agreement to provide expedited access to specialized resources needed to respond to and recover from natural and human caused events that disrupt public and private drinking water and wastewater utilities. Unlike existing statewide mutual aid agreements, WARN membership is open to both public and private utilities. By adopting the WARN approach to mutual aid and assistance, drinking water and wastewater utilities in each state are able to sign a single agreement covering issues such as indemnification, workers' compensation, and reimbursement. The agreement also allows for utilities to share equipment, personnel, and other resources to respond effectively to any crisis.



*Wastewater Operations staff constantly monitor plant conditions and make process adjustments, when necessary.*

**Wastewater Treatment.** The Commission operates seven wastewater treatment facilities throughout the County treating a total of 1.60 billion gallons of wastewater. The Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility is our largest advanced wastewater treatment facility. The facility utilizes anaerobic digestion as part of the treatment process. The use of anaerobic digestion at wastewater treatment facilities in the United States dates back to the early 1900's. Anaerobic digestion is both a biological process and an engineered system that requires expertise in both disciplines for successful solids treatment. The objectives for anaerobic digestion at the facility is to stabilize primary and secondary solids, to reduce pathogens, reduce the mass of material, as well as to produce usable methane. The facility uses two 440,000-gallon capacity concrete and steel digesters.



*Work on the digester at the Marlay-Taylor Facility consists of draining and dewatering the digester tanks.*

In July of this year, contractors cleaned one of the digesters. The decision to clean the digester tank is based on several factors. Digesters are typically cleaned every 5 years, but that is only a general industry guideline. The timing is based on each facility's specific situation. The decision to take the digester offline for cleaning is based on a variety of factors: the degree to which grit and scum has accumulated within the tank, thereby reducing its effective volume; the condition of internal heating and mixing equipment, the availability of alternate solids handling equipment as well as the overall digester performance.

At our Northern Treatment Facilities, work continues on the design of the St. Clements Shore wastewater treatment plant. All of our northern treatment facilities (*Wicomico Shores, Chopticon High School, Charlotte Hall and Forrest Farms*) continue to operate efficiently and meet all permit parameters.

**Response Protocol for Sanitary Sewer Overflows.** In conjunction with the County Health Officer and the Department of Emergency Services, the Commission updated the public notification procedures in accordance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). Public notifications are intended advise the public of any potential health hazards associated with sewer overflows within 24 hours of being made aware of an incident. Notifications include; Code Red Reverse 911, Facebook posts, website notices, site postings, County public information al releases, door-to-door communication door tags, media releases or other media social platforms.



**Water Treatment and Distribution.** There are approximately 2,800 fire hydrants (*publicly owned and private*) throughout the county that the Commission oversees. As an ongoing effort to provide adequate fire protection, we have an ongoing fire hydrant inspection program. The inspection program includes ensuring that each hydrant is free of obstructions, is in proper working order and is adequately painted. The inspection also



*Shown above is the newly completed water station in Town Creek, which will help serve the surrounding neighborhood for years to come.*

includes lubricating threads, replacing caps, checking for any leaky gaskets and conducting a flow test to determine both the amount of water available for fighting fires and the general condition of the distribution system. Hydrants are color coded according to industry standards to indicate the amount of available flow. Once the inspection is complete, the information is turned over to Commission staff for inclusion into our records as well as uploaded to the county's publicly available GIS database portal.

**Excessive Water Use.** In order to conserve, protect, and use water resources within the State, it is necessary to control the appropriation or use of surface and underground waters. The Maryland Department of the Environment issues Water Appropriations Permits for the withdraw of ground water. The Commission has Appropriations Permits for every water system that it operates. In October 2022, the Commission updated the *Water Conservation Policy – Excessive Usage and Water Restrictions Policy*. This Policy seeks to establish notification and enforcement procedures to limit excessive water use during droughts, natural disasters, planned or unplanned potable water shortages or when deemed a waste of water. These procedures are intended to help protect the public water supply and the Commission reserves the right to implement further mandatory rules and regulations to reduce the amount of water used in the County.

### Wastewater Collections and Maintenance.

Conveying and pumping wastewater is a challenging endeavor. From sanitary sewer overflows to operations and maintenance, it is a challenge to our staff to stay on top of everything. Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) continue to be a major problem. Finding and fixing sources of I&I is an ongoing effort of the Collections and Maintenance staff. Attention has been given to areas of the system, such as rehabilitating and repairing sanitary sewer manholes in the collections system. By restoring these structures to like new condition, we reduce any extraneous water from entering our system, thereby reducing costs to our customers. These manholes are located near streams and have been inundated with flood waters or have been otherwise affected by groundwater. Other I&I efforts include smoke testing and visually inspecting these fixtures out in the field.



*Public outreach is an important part of our job, educating the public on what we do and the challenges that we face. We participated in the annual National Night Out event at the Country Lakes neighborhood.*



*Staff is always working to improve our system. Here, the maintenance staff is cleaning the wetwell at one of our pumping stations.*

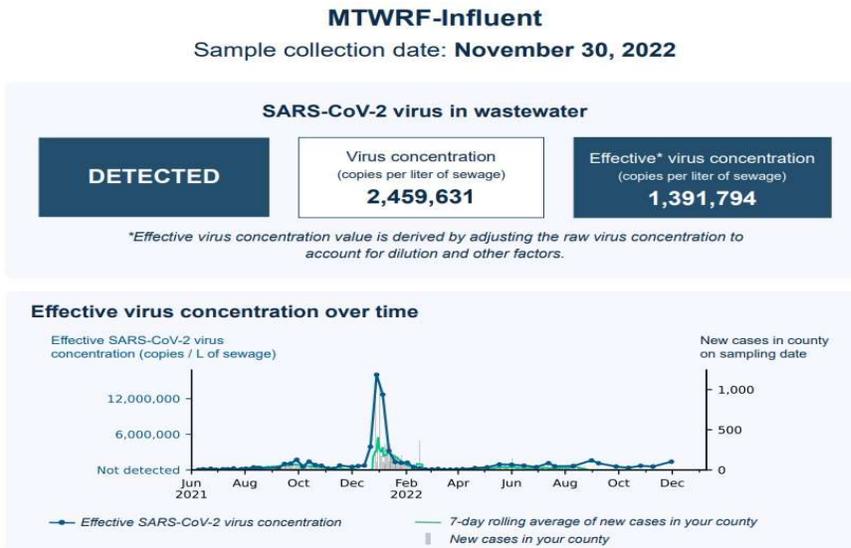
On St. George’s Island, staff had found that grinder pumps became inundated with water during coastal storms and tidal events. By raising the grinder pumps in question, staff was able to reduce the amount of water that entered the collections system. Again, this work not only reduces the cost of treatment but also reduces the number of sanitary sewer overflows (SSO’s).

Our maintenance staff is committed to working to keep our system reliable and efficient throughout the year. There has been a tremendous amount of work completed throughout the system including an ongoing grinder pump replacement project, installing new pumps a various wastewater stations and upgrading controls and SCADA at other stations.

**Warranty Program for Emergency Repairs.** Again, this year, MetCom continues to stress to its customers how important it is to protect their homes from the unexpected expense and inconvenience of emergency repairs. The Commission selected Service Line Warranties of America (SLWA), a premier provider of home emergency repair programs to homeowners nationwide, to offer Exterior Water Service Line and Exterior Sewer/Septic Coverage. As of July 1, 2022, there were 2,707 policies in place with 61 exterior water line claims (\$136,402), 47 external sewer line claims (\$128,610), and 34 interior plumbing and drainage claims (\$25,772) completed, saving residents \$290,584 in repair / replacement costs.

## LABORATORY: WATER QUALITY TESTING & ANALYSIS

**Viral Outbreak Testing.** Beginning in June of 2020, the Commission partnered with the St. Mary's County Health Department, St. Mary's College of Maryland, the Town of Leonardtown, and the Maryland Environmental Service to collect wastewater samples to measure and monitor the raw viral concentration (genome copies per liter of sewage) of SARS-CoV-2 virus. We have been collecting samples from various sewer sheds around the county.



*With the ongoing pandemic, wastewater surveillance monitoring is crucial for local and state leaders to make decisions. MetCom is proud to be part of that effort.*

The Commission has recently agreed to begin further testing in conjunction with many other municipalities in a nationwide effort to track SARS-CoV-2 virus, Respiratory Syncytial virus (RSV), Influenza A virus and potentially Monkeypox as well. Monitoring these viral outbreaks will give local and state health officials better information to keep the public informed and safe.

**COVID Wastewater Dashboard.** Wastewater samples continued to be collected from several private, public and municipal wastewater treatment plants throughout the County as part of a collaborative initiative by the St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission, St. Mary's County Health Department, and St. Mary's College of Maryland. Testing of the viral load (*number of viral particles per liter of wastewater*) was able to demonstrate changes in amounts of SARS-CoV-2 in the sewer systems serving several locations in St. Mary's County. This was an indicator of possible increases in COVID-19 in the specific area served by a particular wastewater treatment plant. Since COVID-19 may be asymptomatic in some people, the posted results <http://smchd.org/covid-19-wastewater/> were intended to encouraged even asymptomatic residents to evaluate their exposure risk and seek COVID-19 testing if they have risk for infection.

### COLLABORATION

New studies show that timely detection of viral outbreaks is crucial for public health. Wastewater epidemiology can help to gauge the level of viral outbreaks due to a viral infection because a broad community or area can be tested rapidly. By identifying viral loads in these communities, this testing can help public health officials plan more effectively.

**Consumer Confidence Reports.** The Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires community water systems to deliver a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), also known as an annual drinking water quality report. The 2021 Consumer Confidence Reports for MetCom’s 28 water systems are published on our MetCom website. Each Water Quality Report contains useful information such as conservation tips, a description of potential contaminants, as well as information regarding the source of the water, water quality results. As usual, there were no exceedances of the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) on the substances tested.

### Water Quality (Consumer Confidence) Reports

MetCom is proud to present the following Water Quality Reports, to keep you informed about the safety and quality of the drinking water we provide. Our Water Quality Reports, which are also known as our Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs), are published every year in accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s July 1 deadline. The Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs) provide consumers information about the quality of drinking water in an easy to read format. This report is also known as an annual water quality report or drinking water quality report. The CCR includes information about the water system, water sources, definitions, levels of detected contaminants, water quality compliance/violations, and some educational information.

- 2021
- 2020
- 2019
- MDE PFAS Testing

*All Water Quality Reports are posted on our MetCom website at <https://www.metcom.org/operations>*

**2022 Innovation Award.** On April 7, 2022, the St. Mary’s County Health Department hosted a COVID-19 Partner Forum during National Public Works Week and recognized



*Metropolitan Commission staff members George Erichsen (left) Edward Hogan and Woody Norris stand with Health Officer Dr. Meena Brewster (right)*

key community partners for their contributions to local pandemic response over the past two years. The Metropolitan Commission was honored to be presented with the 2022 Innovation Award for COVID-19 wastewater monitoring, the first of its kind in Maryland. Citations from the Maryland General Assembly were also presented by Delegate Crosby. Dr. Brewster announced that ...” these essential employees,

*scientists, and engineers stayed true to cutting edge technology and were the innovators behind our wastewater surveillance system in St. Mary’s County. Thank you for rising to the incredible challenge to serve and protect our community. Our SMCHD team and community are tremendously grateful for your (MetCom) service.... “*

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

The IT Department continues to maintain MetCom’s information systems by performing routine equipment maintenance, upgrading/replacing aging equipment, installing/patching software, and installing new systems to improve information access, interchange, and security. The IT Department’s Fiscal Year 2022 accomplishments include:

### Cybersecurity

In April, the IT Department partnered with the Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to conduct Remote Penetration Testing (RPT), Open-Source Information Gathering, Phishing Assessment, and Web Application Assessment. The six-week test aimed to identify risks within MetCom’s information systems environment, provide an actionable report for increasing our security posture, identify specific external attack vectors, and to determine the extent of any possible compromises.

The assessment team’s overall observation was that MetCom “has a well configured and maintained environment”. Further, they found that email and infrastructure controls “significantly reduced the effectiveness of malicious code” within our environment. CISA’s final report showed a few minor vulnerabilities. These findings were quickly mitigated by applying the recommendations offered in the RPT Assessment Summary Report.

In addition to the one-time remote penetration testing, MetCom also participates in monthly Cyber-Hygiene Services offered by CISA. These scanning and assessment services help MetCom’s IT Department reduce our exposure to threats by taking a proactive approach to discovering and mitigating attack vectors.

### Increased Capacity

IT purchased and installed an additional database server as a dedicated repository for ArcGIS mapping data. As a geographic information system, ArcGIS provides the mapping and spatial data analysis needed to maintain MetCom’s vast water and wastewater infrastructure. The dedicated hardware will offer better performance and reliability through lack of contention with other business systems or applications for system resources.



### Increased Remote Access Security

IT continues to migrate remote users from the older Layer 2 Tunneling Protocol (L2TP) to the newer recommended Internet Key Exchange version 2 (IKEv2) for virtual private networking connections. IKEv2 offers many advantages over L2TP including stronger encryption algorithms, better protection for man-in-the-middle and denial-of-service attacks, and reduced bandwidth use.



The following represents our performance in FY 2022:

- 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 1.25 – 1.50.

This means MetCom can fund its debt service requirement 1.41 times after all operational expenses.



Debt Service Coverage Ratio = (Total Revenue - Total O&M / Total Debt Service	FY22 Audit
Operating Revenues*	
Service Charges	\$ 16,151,482
Debt Service Charges	11,151,076
Miscellaneous	353,252
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 27,655,810
Operating Expenses**	
Direct Operating Expenses	9,501,454
Administrative Expenses	5,630,262
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 15,131,716
Net Revenues	\$ 12,524,094
Debt Service	
Principal	\$ 6,479,013
Interest	1,848,373
Total Debt Service	\$ 8,327,386
Debt Service Coverage Ratio	1.50
<b>Target Debt Service Coverage Ratio *</b>	<b>1.25-1.50</b>
AWWA Benchmark Performance Indicator (median)	1.30

- 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 2022 has proven to be even less than the prior three fiscal years.

A Measure of the outstanding debt compared to the ability to pay it	Audit FY22
Total Debt:	
Total Debt All DHCD & Drawn MDE	\$ 96,275,218
Total Debt Undrawn MDE	
Total Debt Drawn & Undrawn	\$ 96,275,218
Operating & Debt Service Revenue:	
Service Charges	\$ 16,151,482
Debt Service Charges	11,151,076
Miscellaneous	353,252
Total Operating & Debt Service Revenues	\$ 27,655,810
Outstanding Debt (Drawn & Undrawn) to Operating & Debt Service Revenues *	3.48 X
<b>Target - 5X or Below</b>	<b>5X or Below</b>

• **Annual combined Customer Bill vs. Median Household Income**

Performance Range Target:		
1.27 (top quartile) -1.59 (median)		<b>FY22 Approved</b>
		5,000 Gallons/Month
<b>Water</b>		
Ready-To-Serve Charge		\$ 9.87
Water Usage		8.90
System Improvement Charge		12.48
Water - Estimated Monthly Service Charge		\$ 31.25
<b>Sewer</b>		
Ready-To-Serve Charge		\$ 18.81
Sewer Usage		25.55
System Improvement Charge		15.39
Sewer - Estimated Monthly Service Charge		\$ 59.75
Bay Restoration Fee		\$ 5.00
<b>Total Estimated Monthly Service Charge</b>		<b>\$ 96.00</b>
<i>Bill at Prior Approved Fiscal Year Rates</i>		\$ 94.15
St. Mary's County Median Household Income		
2013-2017 US Census Bureau 2019 Inflation Adjusted		\$ 95,864
MetCom Annual Bill % of Annual MHI		1.20%
Adopted Target Annual Bill % of Annual MHI 1.50%		
AWWA Benchmark Performance Indicator (median) 1.59%		
Lexington Park Median Household Income		
2011-2015 US Census Bureau		
2013-2017 US Census Bureau		\$ 73,022
MetCom Annual Bill % of Annual MHI in Lexington Park		1.58%
Annual Combined Bill % of MHI: National Median, All Credits (1)*		
	National 'A' Median	2.90%
	National 'AA' Median	2.00%
	National 'AAA' Median	1.40%

This 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 2022.

The measurement is made on an average usage of 5,000 gallons of water per month for a typical customer.

The average bill is measuring less, at 1.20% for 5,000 gallons, which is below the 1.5% target benchmark of 1.50%.



**NOTE:** Service affordability provides a measure of the affordability of water and sewer service as a percentage of Median Household Income (MHI). Approximately 66% of our customers use 0-5000 gallons per month.

- **MetCom’s Sufficient Operational Reserves**

Days Cash on Hand = Undesignated Cash Reserves / Total O&M Costs	FY22 Audit
Unrestricted Reserves	
General Fund Reserves	
Capital Liquidity Reserves	\$ 3,500,000
Remaining Operational Reserves	8,009,697
Total General Fund Reserves	\$ 11,509,697
Other Unrestricted Reserves	2,273,747
Total Unrestricted Reserves	\$ 13,783,444
Restricted Reserves	\$ 18,475,121
Total Reserves	\$ 32,258,565
Total Operating Expenses	15,475,295
Operating Expenses Per Day	42,398
Days Cash on Hand	
General Fund Capital Liquidity	83
General Fund Remaining Operational	189
Other Unrestricted	54
Total Unrestricted Reserves	247
<b>Target Unrestricted Reserves - Days Ca</b>	<b>90-180</b>
AWWA Benchmark Performance indicator	152-271

This ratio is a measurement of liquidity that gauges flexibility to pay near term obligations.

Operational reserves should be maintained between 90 and 180 days.

FY 2021 measured at 281 days. Exceeding the target, allows for operational leeway in future budgeting.



### **Policy & Procedure Adoption and Updates**

FIN-13-01: Tenant/Landlord Account Transfers & Billing Errors. Continuing the temporary hold on account transfers into a tenant’s name. Due to COVID-19 and American Recovery Act Plan disallowing disconnection of service due to non-payment, MetCom has no recourse to collect payment from a tenant, thus the property owner is responsible for non-payment.

### **2022 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 table on the following page reflects the 2022 Tax Sale data.

### Tax Sale Data

Total Accounts At Tax Sale 3/5/2021	Accumulated Past Due Plus Deposit & Fee's through June, 2021	Bank Owned or in Foreclosure	Total Accounts Sold at Tax Sale	Total Amount Paid at Auction
28 Residential	\$ 47,430.95	0 Residential	28 Residential	\$ 5,935,599.91
1 Commercial	\$ 7,145.45	0 Commercial	1 Commercial	\$ 949,600.50
<b>29 Total</b>	<b>\$ 54,576.40</b>	<b>0 Total</b>	<b>29 Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,885,191.41</b>

### Other Post-retirement Benefits Liability (OPEB)

The total OPEB liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of June 30, 2021, rolled forward to June 30, 2022. The audited OPEB liability is \$3,529,350.

### Infrastructure Financing Bonds and Loans



On July 1, 2021, the Commission issued an advance refunding of Issues 2012B, 2013A, and 2014A in the principal amount of \$17,026,696 Series 2021 (Taxable). These bonds were issued with a true interest cost of 1.79% to refund. This advance refunding was issued to take advantage of a favorable interest rate environment, and to reduce total debt service payments in excess of \$2,000,000.

On July 1, 2021, MetCom issued General Obligation Bonds Series 2021A in the principal amount of \$13,210,248. These bonds were issued with a true interest cost of 1.79%. The proceeds of the Series 2021A Bond will be used to finance all or a portion of the costs of various routine and non-routine capital upgrades, rehabilitation, improvements or renovations to its various water and wastewater facilities.

On July 30, 2021, the Commission closed on a Water Quality Loan through the Maryland Department of the Environment, Water Quality Financing Administration in the amount of \$2,389,167 for Phase 2 of the St. Clement Shores Water System Replacement project.

On December 2, 2021, MetCom issued a \$10,590,570 of Infrastructure Financing bonds Series 2021A-1 and 2021A-2 in conjunction with CDA. The proceeds will be used to finance all or a portion of costs of various capital projects.

### LEGISLATION

The St. Mary's County's Metropolitan Commission and Commissioners of St. Mary's County were granted legislative approval by the Maryland General Assembly, in Chapter 113-9 of the St. Mary's County Code, to provide the Commission with dedicated debt authority.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- Document Retention Program.** The Commission developed and adopted a document and records retention procedure to serve as the initial maintenance, retention, and disposal schedule for all physical and electronic records of the Commission. This procedure meets or exceeds state archival standards and includes ability to utilize the County's State-approved archival facility, as needed. This will also ensure that any official records no longer needed by the Commission are discarded at the proper time.

- Scholarship Program.** Our Scholarship program is funded



*Scholarship Recipient Robert Miller with his father, Kevin Miller.*

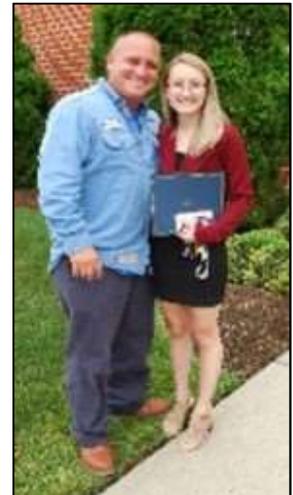
thru the generous donations of Commissioner Board member Mr. Keith Fairfax, and is independently administered through the Business, Education and Community Alliance (BECA). No customer/rate payer's monies are being utilized to establish or supplement the Scholarship. Employees also have the opportunity to personally contribute to the Scholarship fund through payroll deductions. 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. 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 GPA and plan to enroll full time in an accredited college or in an accredited vocational training program. A Scholarship Committee was established to ensure that implementation is carried out in a fair and consistent manner and to serve as a liaison between the Commission and BECA. Commissioner Fairfax contributed more funds to the FY 2022 Scholarship, which allowed for the award of more scholarships. We were able to award three students \$1,760 each. The winners were, Nicole Gray, daughter of employee Renee Young-Gray, Robert Miller, son of employee Kevin Miller and Kaiah Warring, daughter of employee George Warring. Nicole Gray and Robert Miller are repeat winners. To learn more about the MetCom scholarship program, please visit our website at <https://www.metcom.org> and select the Human Resources tab.



*Scholarship Recipient Nicole Gray*



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*Scholarship Recipient Kaiah Warring with her father, George Warring.*

- **Christmas in April.** The Employees of MetCom participate in the Christmas in April event each year and team up with several other volunteers for the effort. COVID-19 restrictions prevented our participation the last two years; however, on April 30, 2022, we were able to continue the tradition of volunteering to help others within our community. To learn more, or to volunteer with Christmas in April St. Mary's, visit their website at [www.christmasinaprilsmc.org](http://www.christmasinaprilsmc.org).



- **Christmas Charity.** MetCom employees choose a local charity to contribute to during the Christmas Season every year. Fundraising efforts and events are conducted throughout the year and culminate at the annual holiday potluck luncheon. Regrettably, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the past few years we were not able to be together. This year however we are resuming the activities and plan on hosting our annual potluck luncheon. It has been decided that because this is our first time back since COVID, we will roll the funds over to next year and choose a charity at that time.

- **Children's National Medical Center of Washington.** Each 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 MetCom employees, George Warring and Mike Stroud, who organize and facilitate the drive. MetCom employees are extremely generous each year with donated toys for this great cause. For more information on becoming involved in programs like this visit <https://childrensnational.org/giving/get-involved>.

- **Safety & Security Enhancements.** MetCom implemented a Visitor Badging System, that requires all visitors to register and obtain a badge at the front desk. This allows for us to know who is in the building at all times. The system also requires the visitor to note who he/she is visiting and the purpose of the visit. MetCom has also began the planned reinforcement of lobby walls along with bullet resistant glass at the front desk to enhance the safety of the employees.
- **Retiree Insurance Enhancement.** MetCom has added MetCom Retiree Supplemental Insurance for those retirees 65 and older that are not eligible to participate in MetCom's Retiree Health Insurance due to service requirements. This insurance is at no cost to MetCom. This program was created to offer a Medicare concierge service to help seniors understand Medicare and cut through the clutter and confusion often associated with their health plan decisions. This Voluntary Retiree Benefit Choice program will provide seniors with in-depth consultations, expert advice to evaluate comprehensive benefit choices, unique coverage options, program flexibility, a simplified enrollment process and professional services delivered by experienced and dedicated Benefit Specialist. It is a unique hybrid solution that gives retirees access to the best options available.

- **Science Fair.** The Metropolitan Commission continued its annual partnership with the St. Mary's County Board of Education and provided several staff members as volunteer judges during the St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair, which was held on January 22, 2022. It was with great pleasure that the St. Mary's Metropolitan Commission presented Kate George from Father Andrew White School (*Junior Division*) and Henry Yeatman from Great Mills High School (*Senior Division*) with the **2022 Environmental Excellence Awards** in recognition of their outstanding projects entitled "What will Reduce Acidity the Most" and "A Small Solution for Water Pollution".



The projects demonstrated outstanding academic excellence and an enhanced understanding of water resources and / or wastewater treatment as it relates to the environment. This distinctive award was presented on behalf of the Metropolitan Commission in conjunction with the St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair that was held on January 22, 2022. Along with the Environmental Excellence Award plaque is a \$100 Junior Division and \$250 Senior Division visa cash award card. We hope these students will consider pursuing similar related research as a part of their future studies and possibly expand that experience into a career with the Commission.

- **Citizens Academy.** On November 1, 2022, Metropolitan Commission staff participated in its first Citizens Academy along with several other community partners, including the Health Department, Libraries, Sheriff's Office and the Department of Social Services. The St. Mary's County Government's Citizens Academy provides an overview of county programs and services. Participants also gain a better understanding of county government operations by learning from directors and staff from County Administration (Finance/IT/Legal/PIO), the Departments of Aging and Human Services, Economic Development, Land Use and Growth Management, Recreation and Parks, Public Works & Transportation and Emergency Services.



## SUMMARY OF FY 2022 STATISTICS AND DATA

<u>Description</u>	<u>Number</u>
Replacement Value of Facilities ( <i>i.e., plants and stations</i> )	\$121.3M
Sewage Treatment Plants ( <i>owned &amp; operated</i> )	7
Sewage Pumping Stations	66
Residential Grinder Pumps	1,799
Sewer Manholes	3917
Miles of Gravity Sewer Line	168
Miles of Sewer Force Main	125
Age of Gravity Sewer Lines / Mains <21, 21-46,> 46 yrs	41%, 38%, 21%
Age of Force Sewer Lines / Mains < 21, 21-46, > 46	29%, 68%, 3%
Sewer Customers ( <i>connected &amp; unconnected</i> )	17,726 / 352
New Sewer EDUs	155
Gallons Wastewater Conveyed / Treated	1.29 / 1.60 Billion
<hr/>	
Water Systems	28
Well Sites / Water Pumping Stations	67 / 55
Water Towers ( <i>elevated / ground storage</i> )	18/39
Miles of Water Lines (< 2" diameter) / Mains (≥ 2" diam)	26 / 281
Water Meters	16,415
Age of Water Mains < 21, 21-46, > 46 years	48% ,43%, 9%
Water Customers ( <i>connected / unconnected</i> )	17,840 / 191
New Water EDUs	89
Gallons Water Supplied	1.297 Billion
Emergency Generators	92
Fire Hydrants	2,729
<hr/>	
MDE Permits	
Water / Sewer	43 / 7
Full Time Employees ( <i>funded</i> )	97
Plans Reviewed	
Capital Project Review	31
Development Review	208
Plat Review	43
Connection Permits Issued (water & sewer)	159
Miss Utility Locate Tickets	8,180



# The Metropolitan Commission

**WE ARE.....**

**M***otivated*

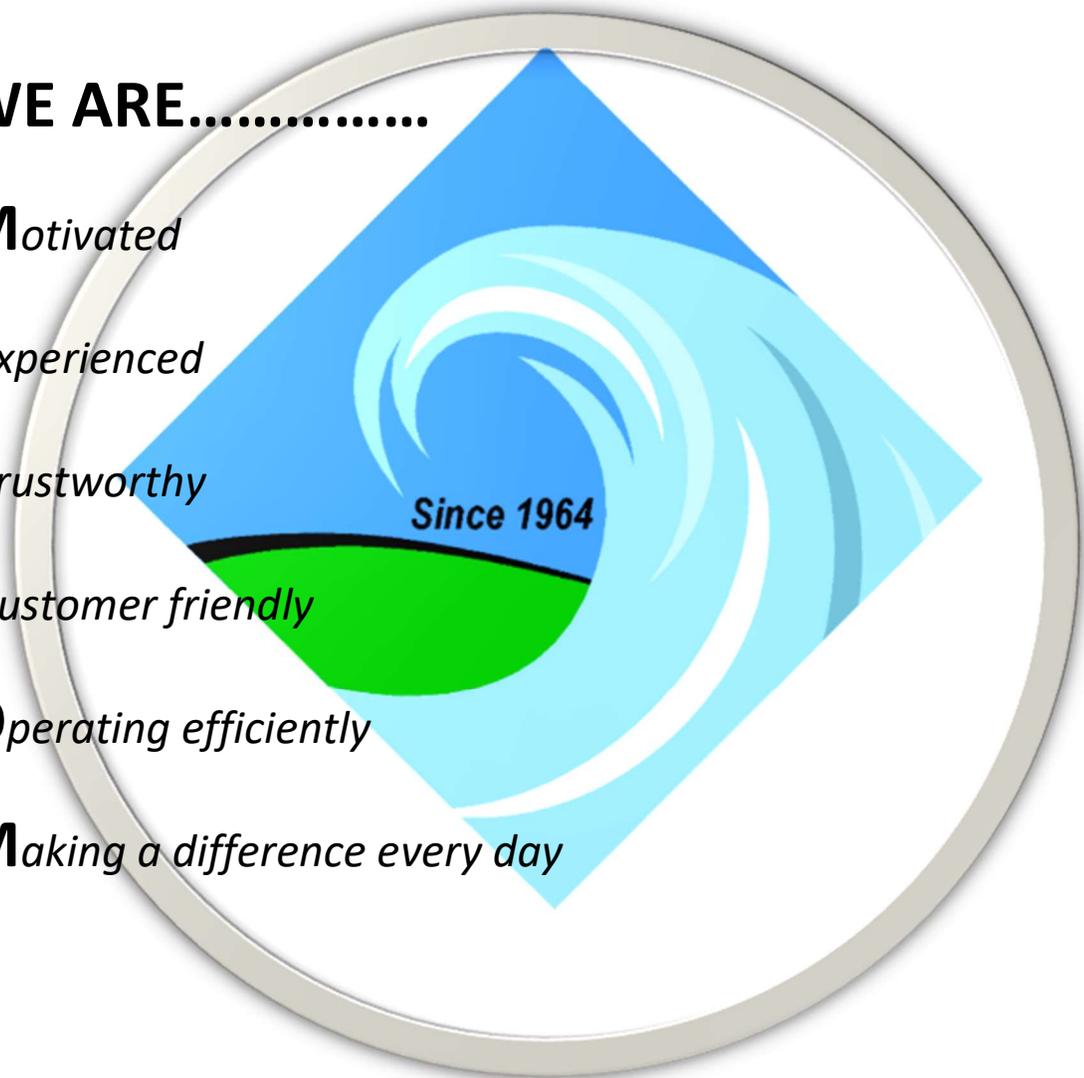
**E***xperienced*

**T***rustworthy*

**C***ustomer friendly*

**O***perating efficiently*

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



***“Community First”***

