



## FY 2021 Recommended Budget Budget Question

Board Question #: 35

**BUDGET QUESTION:** If 2 of the 3 Sampler positions were removed, would a Sample Coordinator be necessary?

**RESPONDING DEPARTMENT/OFFICE:** Utilities

**RESPONSE:** The positions are fully funded by the rates and fees paid by water/sewer customers and therefore have no real estate tax rate impact. In addition, since the positions are primarily associated with the drinking water distribution and sewer collection system, the number of FTE's required are independent of City/County wastewater treatment consolidations at this time.

If two of the three sampler positions were unfunded, the transition and necessary expansion of the Sampling Program could not take place in FY 2021. Any decrease from the requested four FTEs would leave the County vulnerable to noncompliance with public health and environmental regulations.

Currently, the water plants have four licensed operators covering the bacteriological and chemical sampling requirements for the distribution system, community centers, and the schools. The request made by the Utilities Department for three samplers is a bare minimum requirement to maintain our current sampling workload. Current sampling for the distribution system and the smaller systems include over 1200 compliance bacteriological samples, 300 heterotrophic plate count samples, over 200 Nitrite samples, 32 Total Trihalomethane samples (TTHMs), 32 Haloacetic Acid samples (HAA5s), and 40 Water Quality samples annually. At varying intervals and frequencies, depending on the system, the Entry points require sampling for parameters that include 17 metals, 26 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), 13 Inorganics, 52 Semi-Volatile Organic Chemicals (SOCs), Nitrate+Nitrite and Cyanide. The Manager and Chief Operator at Motts spend a large portion of their time overseeing the many sampling compliance programs for each system and responding to customer concerns relating to water quality. Program oversight responsibilities (distribution system, community wells, schools and customer concerns) would transition to the Sampling Coordinator. The Coordinator would also work with contract laboratories for compliance with large programs such as Disinfection Byproducts Rule, Unregulated Contaminants Monitoring Rule (UCMR), the current Lead and Copper Rule, etc.

In addition, staff anticipates a need to expand this program to support future departmental goals and obligations. The Coordinator will work with the Engineering Data Manager to develop workflows within Cityworks to build and expand our database and secure electronic data entry for easier retrieval and use throughout the Department. The three samplers will be cross-trained in the laboratory to assist Chemists with heavy workloads. Overseeing the samplers' training schedules and maintaining necessary laboratory records would be completed by the Coordinator.

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### **Budget Question**

The preeminent driving force behind the transition of sampling responsibilities from water plant staff to a purpose-built and adequately staffed Sampling Program is preparation for meeting new regulatory requirements. The EPA is in the process of finalizing the Revised Lead and Copper Rule. When this rule becomes effective, the sampling burden increases tremendously to include childcare facilities and schools in addition to increased sampling throughout the distribution system. This addition alone would increase the current lead and copper sampling from 30 samples every three years to potentially over 3,500. The frequency of sampling increases from every three years to annually, with strict monitoring, inventory, and record retention requirements. Additional testing will also be required for the upcoming UCMR. Current requirements for UCMR4 already require sampling at EPA determined intervals over the course of a couple years resulting in 34 analytes being tested and over 500 data points. This will only increase with the upcoming UCMR5. The department is also anticipating extensive changes to monitoring requirements for emerging contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and many others that will place an additional burden on overseeing this program.

The original request of four FTEs is the minimum required for the successful continuation of this program and is necessary in order for the Utilities Department to continue to provide safe, clean drinking water for our customers. If the positions are not approved, the Department will need to substantially reduce support services to Spotsylvania General Government and to the Spotsylvania Schools to comply with regulatory requirements associated with the regulated public drinking water system. Consequently, the County would need to outsource drinking water testing for facilities not served by the public water system, and the Schools would need to outsource operations of their drinking water treatment systems as existing Utilities Department staff would necessarily be redirected to ensure sampling regulations are met.

**ESTIMATE OF STAFF TIME SPENT ON RESPONSE:** 1 hour