



PRESS RELEASE

DETROIT WATER & SEWERAGE DEPARTMENT

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Detroit Water & Sewerage Department looks to future with new chief transformation and operating officers

- **Robert Presnell** will transition to a newly created role, **chief innovation and transformation officer**, and will be responsible for enhancing the customer experience and improving business process through key initiatives
- **Timothy Cavitt** has been hired as the **chief operating officer** and will oversee several operating groups

DETROIT – The Detroit Water & Sewerage Department (DWSD) is announcing key leadership changes within the department. Since 2016, DWSD has transitioned from being a regional water and wastewater treatment provider to focusing exclusively on the distribution of water, collection of wastewater and managing stormwater in the city of Detroit. To further improve its operations under this new business model, DWSD Director Gary Brown has announced two key leadership changes.

Robert Presnell, who has served as chief operating officer (COO) since January 2016, has been named DWSD's first chief innovation and transformation officer. In his new role, Presnell will be responsible for creating long-term value by leading the organization through the execution of strategic initiatives.

"During the past four years, Rob has been invaluable in positioning DWSD for growth by improving the business practices and identifying new technology, while reducing our cost and contributing to a much improved collection rate. This includes adding convenience for our customers through the kiosk network and a mobile-friendly customer web portal. He has completely revamped the department's service delivery and customer experience. Rob's new role will enable him to lead innovation, business process improvements and digital transformation across the entire department," Brown said.

Replacing Presnell as COO effective February 3 is Timothy Cavitt. He will provide strategic direction for DWSD's day-to-day maintenance and repair operations for Detroit's water and sewer systems, including meter operations and fleet.

Previously, Cavitt spent approximately four years as the chief operating officer at Voltea, a water technology company, in Texas. He has 15-plus years of experience managing, leading and designing water and wastewater applications for various national and international utility and private sector companies.

Cavitt has a Master of Business Administration degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio; a Master of Science degree in engineering from the University of Houston Clear Lake in Houston, Texas; and a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

"Timothy has a proven track record of creating efficiencies in organizations that need to be mindful of maximizing public dollars. This is another way to demonstrate to our customers how serious I am about providing the best service to the city of Detroit," said Brown.

Currently, all operations, engineering and construction staff, report through DWSD Deputy Director and Chief Engineer Palencia Mobley, P.E. She was instrumental in establishing DWSD as a retail water and sewer utility, following the creation of the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). Since her appointment in January 2016, Mobley established DWSD's \$500 million Capital Improvement Program to upgrade Detroit's water and sewer systems and improve stormwater management. Under her leadership, DWSD has increased water and sewer infrastructure renewal from 10-15 miles in 2015 to 50 miles in 2019.

"Transitioning Rob to the new position and adding Timothy to our team, will enable Palencia to expand her role in transforming DWSD to become the world's premier urban water utility by focusing on our greatest asset: the people. Her vision is to bridge the gaps within DWSD's operational divisions – including the day-to-day system maintenance, such as responding to water main breaks, to upgrading the water and sewer systems to improve service delivery – to make the department sustainable and responsive to customer needs," said Brown.



Robert Presnell, DWSD Chief Innovation and Transformation Officer



Timothy Cavitt, DWSD Chief Operating Officer

About The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) serves more than 230,000 accounts that includes a residential population of nearly 700,000. DWSD's water network consists of more than 2,700 miles of water main and nearly 3,000 miles of sewer collection piping within the city of Detroit. To learn more about DWSD or to request water services, make payments, or report water problems, call DWSD Customer Care at 313-267-8000 or contact us at www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd.

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