

WASA heads roll

Govt fires CEO Halliday, 9 others in top-level executive shake-up



FIRE: Former WASA CEO Keithroy Halliday



IN: Acting WASA CEO Jeevan Joseph

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The Government yesterday fired Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) CEO Keithroy Halliday in a major upper-management shake-up at the authority.

Newly installed chairman Roshan Babwah confirmed the move, as he revealed that Halliday was among ten top-level executives whose positions were terminated.

The other executives were hired to deal with the contentious transformation plan implemented by the People's National Movement administration, which has been rescinded by the Government.

However, they were not named.

The announcement comes just two days after Public Utilities Minister Barry Padarath publicly described Halliday as "a failed CEO" during his contribution to the debate on the Mid-year Budget Review in Parliament on Monday.

Yesterday, Babwah said Halliday was dismissed with "immediate effect."

"At the board meeting, we implemented the decision of the Cabinet with respect to the transformation plan at WASA. We rescinded that and reverted to the previous structure. What we did only impacted 10 people. All persons who were employed at WASA have reverted back to their substantive position; therefore, there was no job loss to anyone previously employed at WASA. We have ended the service of the CEO."

Jeevan Joseph was appointed as acting WASA CEO and now takes over from Halliday.

In a statement yesterday, WASA said Joseph brings over two decades of extensive technical and managerial expertise in the utilities sector with a distinguished career at the utility.

"His appointment underscores the board's commitment to redefining the path forward for the authority, focused on achieving equity in the supply and distribution of pipe-borne water across Trinidad and Tobago."

Joseph stated, "My focus will be on collaborating with stakeholders, leveraging innovation, and ensuring that everybody in every community receives fair and sustainable access to pipeborne water. Together, we will build a stronger, more responsive WASA."

Halliday was hired last November by the PNM administration to lead WASA's transformation plan.

Guardian Media understands that as part of his employment package, Halliday was earning over \$100,000 per month.

Babwah said there was no immediate pushback from Halliday to the decision to terminate his employment.

"I had a meeting with Mr Halliday, it was a very cordial meeting," he said.

Babwah also said WASA's board stood ready to defend against any potential legal challenges in the future.

"That is what the courts are there for, that in case there are any disputes or any matters in terms of contracts or whatever, have you. I am expecting there may or may not be challenges to the decision of the authority, but we are standing by our decision," he said.

Guardian Media has been unable to verify the identities of the other people linked to the

transformation plan who were dismissed. However, the composition of the assistant directors who assumed duties on December 1, 2024, after Halliday was appointed, included:

Karlene Ammon – Director, Corporate Finance

Neil Derrick – Director, People, Transformation and Central Services

Alisha Romano – Director, Technology, Future Systems and Sustainability

Shaira Ali – Director, Water Management Services (North East)

Kelvin Romain – Director, Water Management Services (North West)

Sharon Bailey – Director, Water Management Services (Central)

Anand Jaggernath – Director, Water Management Services (South)

Brian Williams – Director, Water Management Services (Tobago)

Peter Ganesh – Director, Project Management Office

Dion Abdool – Legal and General Counsel/Corporate Secretary, and;

Ria Chrysostom-Ryan – Chief Internal Auditor

Upon being elected into office, the Kamla Persad-Bissessar Government immediately moved to scrap the transformation plan.

The plan aimed to address the long-standing issues of inefficiency, poor service delivery, and financial constraints within the authority.

During his contribution in the House on Monday, Padarath claimed that the plan cost taxpayers over \$13.4 million to develop and threatened massive job losses numbering 2,500.

Yesterday, Padarath told Guardian Media that the recent action was a step towards implementing a “people-centred” approach, focusing on a leaner, more efficient management team and utilising the IDB loan for infrastructure projects.

“Those affected by the rescinding of the transformation plan were not in the organisation before.

Proper HR practice will be followed. In the long and short of it, yes, we are bringing down into effect the rescinding of that transformation plan.”

Via a statement last night, Padarath said voters gave the UNC Government a large mandate to manifest promised changes. One of them, he said, was scrapping the WASA transformation plan.

Noting Halliday was in the position for over six months, he said, “Last month when I met with the former CEO, I inquired about his perspective on the transformation plan which he was brought in to oversee. His response was deeply alarming, shocking and disturbing. After six months, Mr Halliday told me in front of several WASA employees that he had not yet seen the transformation plan. I asked whether he had a copy and at that time the answer was NO.”

He added, “We’ve afforded Mr Halliday due process, however, we do not have faith and confidence in his ability to effectively manage WASA.”

Also contacted yesterday, Public Services Association president Felisha Thomas, whose union represents WASA workers, said her membership supported the board’s action. She said she had already been contacted by the acting CEO on the way forward.

“WASA possesses a workforce of highly qualified and competent individuals who are eager to contribute to the enhancement of service delivery and the provision of an improved water supply to this country,” Thomas, who campaigned with the United National Congress during the recent General Election, said.

“We look forward to working with this Government and the Minister of Public Utilities, who has done an excellent job in exposing the ills of the PNM on WA- SA’s affairs.”