

TAYLOR REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT
Board Meeting Minutes - Special Session
Crossroads Community Church 4254 S 00 E.W., Kokomo, IN 46902

The Taylor Regional Sewer District met on Thursday, May 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (*Motions italicized*)

Board members present: Scott Waymire, Tyler McClish, Larry Hayes, Brad Bray, John Kilmer

Also present: Justin Saathoff - BCS Management, Chris Kellner - BCS Management, Lana Beregszazi - BCS Management, Tom Astbury - Astbury Water Technology, Brent Dechert - Attorney, Greg Lake - Howard County Stormwater District and Surveyor, Hayden Vest - Howard County Stormwater District

Call to order: President Scott Waymire called the meeting to order at approx. 6:03 p.m. with a quorum present.

Roll Call: All board members were present. President Waymire welcomed John Kilmer to the board.

Business

1. Devon Woods Discussion - Greg Lake, Howard County Stormwater District and Surveyor

Greg Lake addressed the board stating that he wanted to first start with some of the history before discussing what the county is proposing for Devon Woods. Several communities in Howard County were built in the mid to late 1800s on postage stamp size lots with a well and a septic tank tied to a field tile. Over time, the wastewater in that field tile started making its way to the ditches. Mr. Lake was part of the health department in the 1990s when wastewater for Oakford, Hemlock, and Center was investigated. The solution for wastewater in small communities has been a county and statewide issue for the past 30 years. There was a significant effort from the state health department in the early 2000s identifying more than 80,000 failing septic systems in Indiana. The biggest issue to remedying the situation is financing. The Stormwater District is responsible for eliminating illicit discharges from outfalls that discharge into the creeks (receiving waters). A 2017 study revealed there are 12 wastewater treatment plants in Howard County, some are private and others are municipalities, and 18 small communities that are platted similar to Oakford, Hemlock, and Center. Devon Woods is made up of approximately 120 to 130 homes. Only about half of the homes are on the Devon Woods sewer system, which was built in the 1970s. The other half of the homes are on jetting systems. Jetting systems contain an aeration system that passes the wastewater through a chlorinator and then straight to a ditch. These jetting systems were not approved by the state, but were approved by the county for the Devon Woods subdivision. The sewer system was managed and owned by a gentleman that passed away a few years ago. The system was then turned over to the spouse. It has not been properly maintained and is out of money. IDEM has begun to get involved. It will either need to be fixed or shut down. The County Commissioners and County Council, alongside the Stormwater District, have created a renewable, non-reverting fund named the Howard County Stormwater Management Capital Projects Fund. \$200,000 was transferred into this fund from the Stormwater budget and it is to be used for wastewater solutions for these small communities. The money used for solutions are to be repaid if the project moves into construction. The Commissioners are trying to get an additional \$400,000 in grant funds from READI 2.0 to add to the \$200,000.

There are several challenges in fixing Devon Woods. The first problem is that it is a private utility. An asset purchase would have to be made in order to transfer it to a municipality. The next challenge is to evaluate the most cost effective solution. This might include repairing the Devon Woods system, taking the wastewater to Kokomo (if they will accept it), or taking the wastewater to a different plant. The Devon Woods plant also needs to be physically secured. Some of the fencing has fallen down.

Using the Taylor Regional Sewer District to evaluate the Devon Woods situation keeps the community from duplicating services by creating another government entity specifically for this subdivision. It would also allow for possible grant funding to assist with the solution. Adding additional users could also bring down oversight costs lowering the per user rate over time while using county funding for upfront costs. Operations and

administration could be combined also lowering overall costs. Additionally, it allows the District to serve a larger area for a lesser cost.

Concerns from the board were expressed. There are many nearby plants that are in bad shape. If the District helps Devon Woods, who would be the next one to ask for assistance and where would the assistance stop? Mr. Lake explained that in 2000, it was agreed upon by the County Commissioners that TRSD would assist communities on the east side of the county, Russiaville would assist on the west side, and the city would assist those around the city. This agreement led to Howard County sewerage Darrough Chapel. The main reason the county is asking the District to assist is the greater reach of construction funds via a regional sewer district. President Waymire shared his concern of taking on an additional failing system and reinforced the idea that the District's current rate payers should be the board's main priority. Larry Hayes inquired how Devon Woods residents would feel about imposing sewer fees and forced connections. Mr. Lake stated that the residents are happy that the county is attempting to find a solution for them and forced connections would be a phase 2 in the future.

Lana Beregszazi explained that finding construction dollars would be part of the assessment process. She also explained what multiple user rates within a district looks like. Ms. Beregszazi went on to discuss sewer bills and how residents either pay for the construction of the sewer systems in their lot price, mortgage, or sewer bill. The typical sewer rate for systems installed after the homes are already built is right at \$100 in today's market.

Mr. Lake was in attendance at the meeting held by the Devon Woods community. There is no active HOA there. The attorney from the estate owning the plant stated that \$3,500 is currently owed to Duke Energy and it is a \$700 a month bill. No residents of the subdivision have been paying a sewer bill for the last 5 years. The estate cannot legally ask for fees to be paid because when the ownership went to the spouse, a rate was not formally established.

If the District votes to not get involved, IDEM will eventually step in with an agreed order. Chris Kellner commented that it could be possible for IDEM to force receivership to Kokomo or the District due to it being an environmental issue. If Devon Woods is ultimately added to the District, Mr. Kellner stated that most likely it would have its own rate ordinance and current District ratepayers would be insulated from any additional costs or responsibilities.

Attorney Brent Dechert clarified that this meeting is only about the proposed assessment. The board needs to decide if Taylor Regional Sewer District will sponsor the study for Devon Woods by BCS Management. Mr. Lake stated that if the solution does not go to construction, the county is simply out of the money for the assessment. It will not go back into the fund. If the solution does go to construction, the money will be reimbursed back into the fund for future assistance opportunities.

Mr. Lake clarified that he has not approached the City of Kokomo on assistance with Devon Woods. He approached them several years ago asking for assistance with West Middleton and was denied despite offering \$1M of county funding. Mr. Lake proposed the board additional funding of \$20,000 to cover the administration costs for a time period. If the assessment is approved by the District board, it would then go to the Stormwater District for approval.

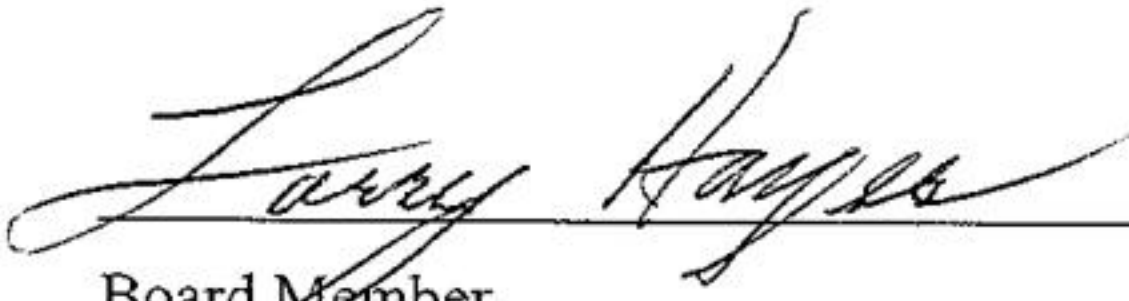
John Kilmer made a motion to approve the Devon Woods assessment by BCS contingent upon the \$20,000 payment from the Stormwater District for administration fees. Seconded by Tyler McClish. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments (0 in attendance)

None

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board, *Tyler McClish moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Scott Waymire. Motion carried 5-0.* The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.


Board Member

Prepared and submitted by Justin Saathoff, BCS Management.