

**BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

IN RE:)
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)
PETITION OF BERRY'S CHAPEL)
UTILITY FOR AN INCREASE IN ITS) **Docket No. 26 - 00039**
RATES AND CHARGES)
)
)
)

DIRECT TESTIMONY
of
JAMES SAVAGE

ON BEHALF OF
BERRY'S CHAPEL UTILITY

May 5, 2026

1 ***Q1. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, BUSINESS ADDRESS AND OCCUPATION***
2 ***FOR THE RECORD.***

3 A1. My name is James Savage. My business address is 106 Mission Court, Suite 106,
4 Franklin, TN 37067. I am the President and Chairman of the Board of Directors
5 for Berry’s Chapel Utility, Inc. (“Berry’s Chapel”).
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7 ***Q2. PLEASE PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND***
8 ***PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.***

9 A2. I have been a member of the Board of Directors for Berry’s Chapel since 2014
10 including three years as Secretary/Treasurer and one and a half years as President
11 and Chairman. This is an unpaid, voluntary role. I am currently a Consulting
12 Database Administrator (DBA) and team lead for HealthTrust Performance
13 Group, a division of HCA Healthcare, a position I have held for nine years. Prior
14 professional experience includes Software Engineer, System Engineer, and
15 college bookstore management. I hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of
16 Business Administration from Syracuse University, a Bachelor of Science,
17 Computer Science, and a Masters in Computer and Information Systems
18 Engineering from Tennessee State University, and an Associate of Applied
19 Science with a triple major in Computer Technology, Networking Technology
20 and Computer Information Systems from Nashville State Community College.
21

22 ***Q3. WHAT DUTIES DO YOU PERFORM AS THE PRESIDENT AND***
23 ***CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD FOR BERRY’S CHAPEL?***

1 **A3.** I oversee the operations of the company, coordinate with other Board members
2 concerning company operations, including financial performance, set the agenda
3 for Board meetings and facilitate Board discussions. I also recommend and
4 review strategic initiatives with the Board and am responsible for seeing that
5 Board decisions are implemented.

6

7 **Q4. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY IN THIS**
8 **PROCEEDING?**

9 A4. I am providing a general overview of Berry's Chapel's operations and a summary
10 of the rate relief that the Company is requesting. Mr. Novak will provide
11 testimony on the Company's accounting methodology for its historical book
12 values as well as the forecasted cost of service calculation and rate design.

13

14 **Q5. PLEASE DESCRIBE BERRY'S CHAPEL UTILITY.**

15 A5. Berry's Chapel is a member-owned wastewater treatment facility serving
16 approximately 1,000 residential customers in the Chapelwood, Cottonwood,
17 Farmington, Legend's Ridge, Hart's Landmark, Dunblane and River Landing
18 subdivisions of Williamson County, a few nearby houses and two, non-residential
19 customers: a school and a church.

20 Berry's Chapel became a customer-owned organization in 2014. Prior to that it
21 was privately owned. The company operates one wastewater treatment plant that
22 is approximately forty-five years old. A collection system extending into the
23 subdivisions serviced feed effluent to the plant for treatment. The company holds

1 a TDEC permit that allows it to discharge into the Harpeth River. Maintaining a
2 clean and healthy river is very important to the company. Over the years, the
3 company has upgraded and/or replaced equipment in order to keep the plant in
4 good operating condition.

5 Company operations are overseen by a board of five directors, each of whom is a
6 resident of one of the subdivisions that we serve. Board members are volunteers
7 who are not paid for their service. A general manager will oversee day-to-day
8 operations of the company, along with an office manager, licensed plant operator,
9 and additional full and part-time staff.

10 When Bruce Meyer, who was our part-time plant manager, shared with the Board
11 that he planned to retire a couple of years ago, the Board conducted an analysis to
12 determine the best approach for replacing him and made the decision to hire a
13 general manager to oversee operational management of the company. Board
14 members have been managing financial aspects of the company, including
15 operational and capital budgeting, in addition to strategic planning. The Board's
16 intention was for the general manager to take over these responsibilities so that
17 the Board could focus on longer term issues.

18 The Board was lucky to find a part-time plant manager in Bruce, and in searching
19 for a replacement it became clear that finding another part-time manager would be
20 very difficult. Aso, over time, it became clear to the Board that there were many
21 additional operational and business issues that Bruce was not able to address as a
22 part-time manager. The Board's intention is for a general manager to assume
23 responsibility for these issues in addition to overseeing plant operations.

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Q6. IF BERRY’S CHAPEL IS A MEMBER-OWNED UTILITY, THEN WHY ARE YOU APPEARING BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION FOR A CHANGE IN RATES?

A6. While state law generally exempts Residential, customer-owned utilities from regulation, Berry’s Chapel also provides wastewater service to two, non-residential customers and is therefore subject to regulation by the Commission.

Q7. WHEN WAS THE LAST RATE CASE FOR BERRY’S CHAPEL?

A7. The Company’s last rate increase was in 2012, docket 11-00198. That rate case was filed by the previous owners of the utility.

Q8. WHAT RATE RELIEF IS THE COMPANY REQUESTING?

A8. As will be addressed by Mr. Novak, the current rates for Berry’s Chapel are inadequate and will not provide the Company with a reasonable opportunity to recover its operating costs. Without rate relief, Berry’s Chapel will have a revenue deficiency of approximate \$216,000 during the attrition period. However, at this time Berry’s Chapel is only requesting to increase our current rates by 10% or approximately \$98,000 to ease the impact on our customers.

Q9. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A9. Yes, it does.

IN THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
AT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

IN RE:

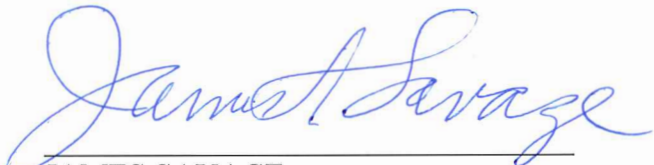
PETITION OF BERRY'S CHAPEL
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DOCKET NO. 26-_____

AFFIDAVIT

I, James Savage, on behalf of Berry's Chapel Utility hereby certify that the attached Testimony represents my opinion in the above-referenced case and the opinion of the Berry's Chapel Utility.



JAMES SAVAGE

Sworn to and subscribed before me
This 14th day of May, 2026



NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: July 7, 2027

