

MINUTES
JOINT FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 18, 2022
TIME: 8:01 A.M.
PLACE: Room C310
MEMBERS: Senators Co-chairman Agenbroad, Crabtree, VanOrden(Bair), Grow, Woodward, Lent, Riggs, Cook, Ward-Engelking, Nye
Representatives Co-chairman Youngblood, Troy, Horman, Amador, Syme, Bundy, Giddings, Nate, Green, Nash
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

Co-Chairman Youngblood called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Ms. Christine Otto, Senior Analyst, LSO Budget & Policy Analysis, presented an overview of the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC). IDOC is comprised of the Board of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole. The two give separate JFAC presentations because they differ in statute and budget and have separate appropriation bills. For FY 2021, IDOC's budget was comprised of 89% General Funds, 10% in dedicated funds, and 1% in federal funds. IDOC has two open audit findings; one has been partially corrected.

Mr. Josh Tewalt, Director, IDOC, explained one of the open audits dealt with procurement irregularities during the launch of a new system. He told the committee IDOC is confident they now have sufficient safeguards in place.

Mr. Tewalt reviewed the current challenges for IDOC. The Covid pandemic severely affected its employees because of the 24/7 nature of IDOC's responsibilities; the brunt of staff shortages was disproportionately experienced by the employees who chose to stay. In October 2021, the staffing situation was at a historic low point. In addition, despite a Covid-related drop in total population, IDOC prisons remain well above in-state capacity, and the population continues to increase.

Mr. Tewalt reviewed some recent successes, which include an improved hiring process, a pay increase for new hires, connection intervention stations, digitization of more than 6.7M client records, and implementation of a new public records request tracking system.

In response to committee questions, **Mr. Tewalt** stated early numbers for the connection intervention stations are very encouraging. Mr. Tewalt further explained public records requests come from media, family and friends of the incarcerated, and vendors who want to do business with the prison system.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2022 Supplemental Request to address a Hepatitis C treatment backlog. This five-year appropriation will allow IDOC to terminate the lawsuit settlement to reduce future payments.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2022 Supplemental Request for pre-prosecution diversion grants. This one-time funding request seeks to prevent justice system involvement, when appropriate, for people with behavioral health problems. This is a recommendation from the Opioid Task Force and the Idaho Behavioral Health Council.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2022 Supplemental Request for the resident bank module. The current banking module is inadequate for the increasing volume of transactions, as well as lacking ability for reconciliation. This one-time funding would be used to upgrade the resident banking system, allowing the department to fulfill its fiduciary and statutory responsibility to manage resident accounts in a more efficient and accurate manner, which also ensures greater accountability to the public.

In response to committee questions, **Mr. Tewalt** said IDOC is working with the management software system developers on the banking module. IDOC is working with OITS for procurement and network interfacing and for the eventual implementation of the banking module.

Mr. Tewalt explained the FY2023 line-item request to address correctional and probation officer entry wage rate and compression. Mr. Tewalt stressed the importance of retaining good staff; IDOC introduced a structured retention bonus system for this purpose.

In response to a committee question about overtime pay, **Mr. Tewalt** explained everyone who earns overtime gets paid the overtime, every two pay periods. He further explained prison security staff is coded the same as law enforcement or other emergency responders. These positions accrue overtime differently from people in the general sector; they use a comp time system. Comp time cannot be used to create overtime pay.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2023 line-item budget request for dedicated fund spending authority to purchase additional structured query language server licenses. Mr. Tewalt explained the decision was made in conjunction with OITS and agreed to send additional information to JFAC.

Mr. Tewalt explained a one-time supplemental appropriation request for reappropriation authority for trauma-informed treatment for people who live and work in correctional treatment facilities. The study will include interventions such as neurofeedback, mindfulness, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing.

Mr. Tewalt explained a one-time supplemental appropriation request for reappropriation authority to replace the current radio system, which is outdated. Most of the prison facilities have areas with significant dead spots in radio coverage, which can have dire life and safety consequences for staff and residents.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2023 line-item budget request for reappropriation authority for an expansion of the east dorm at the South Idaho Correctional Institution. This expansion would modernize the facility and add 80 beds.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2023 line-item budget request to expand vocational work opportunities and camp crew catering units. Currently IDOC has more requests for resident work crews than ever before, and each crew requires oversight by security officers. These supplemental requests are for dedicated spending authority, not General Fund requests, because these programs pay for themselves.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2023 line-item budget request for one-time federal fund spending authority from ARPA to expand the capacity of the wastewater lagoon at the South Boise Complex. This investment will help better manage existing facilities and will provide capacity for future buildings.

Mr. Tewalt explained a FY 2023 line-item budget request for educator career ladder parity. This mirrors the Governor's proposal to fund the education career ladder in the public school system. Another FY 2023 line-item budget request is for federal fund spending authority from ARPA to offset current and unforeseen costs due to Covid.

Mr. Tewalt explained IDOC's current facilities have significant challenges: they are over capacity and must house individuals in county jails and out of state; in most buildings, existing design hinders rehabilitative goals; daily, more than 1000 minimum-custody residents live in a more restrictive environment, at considerably more cost, because of bed misalignment; and facilities have a serious maintenance backlog.

Mr. Tewalt described IDOC's plans to add capacity to deal with these challenges. IDOC plans to build a new female facility, which will revert minimum-custody beds to men; build a new facility with half the beds dedicated to house the aging and infirm; remodel the Annex at ISCI; and build a new facility in eastern Idaho.

Mr. Tewalt explained a supplemental budget request to pre-pay the remaining seven years of the lease purchase agreement for the Correctional Alternative Placement Program, which will save the state almost \$1.9M in interest.

Other funding requests include grants for a Reducing Violent Crime initiative and Innovations in Supervision, line-items requests to expand Probation and Parole Specialists and Reentry Specialists statewide, and a community-based Substance Use Disorder Program.

In response to committee questions, **Mr. Tewalt** stated a huge portion of the IDOC electricity bill is due to old technology lighting. New building plans will allow them to look for better options, including comparing solar vs. electric power.

Mr. Tewalt described the new medical contract IDOC finalized with their new healthcare provider. This is a performance-based contract, with the service goal on improved health outcomes.

In response to committee questions, **Mr. Tewalt** explained construction costs for correctional buildings are much higher than for normal commercial buildings, both from a construction standpoint and a security standpoint. Mr. Tewalt also explained that medical staff make the medical decisions, but sometimes there are challenges because of security concerns due to staff shortages. Mr. Tewalt also said IDOC tracks outcomes, service, and deliverables for the Substance Abuse program.

Ms. Ashley Dowell, Executive Director, Commission for Pardons and Parole, explained in FY 2022 the Commission had a maintenance budget with one line-item supplemental appropriation request for extradition transport costs. Traditionally, the commission has used the Northwest Shuttle, a service organized by states and counties to provide no-cost transports for people across the cooperative area; the program was disrupted by the Covid pandemic.

The Commission requested reappropriation authority to carry over spending authority for unspent money requested in the Decision Unit for a professional service contract for taking minutes at parole hearings.

For FY 2023, the Commission again has a maintenance budget with one line-item request for extradition transport costs.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

Representative Youngblood
Chair

Alyson Jackson
Secretary