MINUTES
Approved by the Committee
Committee on Uniform Accounting and Transparency
Thursday, May 21, 2026
10:00 A.M.
Room WW54
Boise, Idaho

Members in attendance: Cochairs Senator Ricks and Representative Cannon; Senator Grow; Representative Ehlers; and Brandon Woolf, State Controller, State of Idaho Controller's Office (SCO). Legislative Services Office (LSO) staff: April Renfro and Shelley Woods. Absent and excused: Senator Rabe and Representative Green.

Others in attendance: SCO: Alex Doench, Alisa Tena, Kayla Lara, and Jef Lapierie.

NOTE: Presentations and handouts provided by the presenters/speakers are posted to the Idaho Legislature's website https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2025/interim/uat and copies of those items are on file at the Legislative Services Office in the State Capitol. Recordings of the meeting may be available under the committee's listing on the website.

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cochair Ricks called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.; a silent roll call was taken. Cochair Ricks asked for a motion on the minutes. Cochair Cannon moved to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2026, meeting. Representative Ehlers seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITY CENTRAL REGISTRY IMPROVEMENTS AND UPDATE OF TRANSPARENCY EFFORTS

Scott Smith, Chief Deputy Controller, State Controller's Office provided an update on transparency initiatives and the SCO website. Mr. Smith reported that SCO collaborated with stakeholders for ways to improve the submission process for local entities using AI tools and had discussions regarding changing the December 1 deadline to July 1 to better align with Idaho Code. The July 1 deadline would require the reporting of two fiscal years instead of three and would lessen confusion for the entities. The proposed July 1 deadline was still in the pilot phase. Mr. Smith noted that the July 1 deadline would allow additional time for entities to submit data, especially those with a September 30 fiscal year end (87%). He added that Idaho Code, Section, 67-450B requires audits to be submitted within 9 months of the entity's fiscal year end, which would be June 30 for those September 30 fiscal year end entities. Representative Ehlers asked what type of entities were those with different fiscal year ends and if the July 1 deadline was doable for those entities. Mr. Smith cited fire districts with a December 31 deadline as an example and anticipated feedback from those entities in the pilot phase. Mr. Smith added that legislation may be needed to account for the 13% of entities with fiscal year ends other than September 30. He stated that the July 1 deadline would benefit 100% of the entities with regard to submitting their annual budgets. Controller Woolf commented that city and county associations are reporting that small entities are struggling to find accounting firms to perform audits and that the committee may consider discussions about audit thresholds for smaller entities. Mr. Smith suggested collaborating with LSO's Legislative Audits to determine if statute changes were needed to help with the submission of data.

April Renfro, LSO Audits Division Manager, stated that complexities would always exist regardless of deadlines since entities had varying fiscal year ends. She added that December 1 was initially chosen because it was not a fiscal year end and it required entities to submit whatever information they had at that point and time, budget and/or audit. Ms. Renfro noted that entities should be aware of the difference between registry year and fiscal year and the due dates.

Mr. Smith reported that entities are no longer required to manually submit an annual transparency report. SCO collaborated with a vendor and, using AI tools, entities can drag and drop data to the website. AI will review and populate the required data, which has saved SCO a considerable amount of time. He stated that testing for accuracy and efficiency was underway and that good feedback has been received thus far. He added that the AI tool also has built in error handling that will highlight mismatched amounts or data that does not meet the defined criteria then submits error rates to SCO team members who will resolve internally without added pressure on entities. Representative Ehlers expressed appreciation for the use of technology and asked what accuracy rate was. Mr. Smith responded that it was too early to tell and that data was still being collected. Cochair Ricks asked if entities verified the data. Mr. Smith responded that SCO verified that data.

Mr. Smith reviewed the reporting template and updated software. He stated that AI tools are being used to create a user-friendly interface that identifies compliant or noncompliant entities, which will be implemented soon.

Mr. Smith reported on the improvements to the submission of state agency statewide agreements. He stated that agencies can now submit, view, and update data faster and more efficiently.

Mr. Smith concluded by saying that SCO will continue obtaining feedback from entities and stakeholders in preparation for the legislative session and potent legislation to improve the submission process.

Cochair Ricks expressed appreciation for the SCO's efforts to provide uniformity and that comparisons were a nice addition to the website. Mr. Smith thanked the committee for its continued support and guidance.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Representative Ehlers asked if there was any homework for the committee. Mr. Smith responded that any homework was with the SCO.

Cochair Ricks asked what AI tools SCO was using. Mr. Smith stated that Anthropic, Claude, and ChatGPT were the primary tools, but there are a variety of tools available. He added that SCO staff were asked what tools staff were using and found that 117 different tools were being used, from coding to creating documents. Controller Woolf reported that SCO collaborated with Boise State University to use an open source LLM (large language model) to track confidential data. The LLM was named Kirby after a retired employee with 45 years of state service. Representative Ehlers asked if AI tools were used for analyzing data. Controller Woolf confirmed that Kirby was used to perform data analytics. Representative Ehlers expressed interest in using AI in the legislative realm to not only identify fraud but to find efficiencies in using taxpayer dollars. Controller Woolf noted it was imperative to input clean data for accurate analyses. Senator Grow asked if there was a consistent plan for ongoing utilization of data in a productive way. Controller Woolf responded that it would be a good discussion for the committee. Cochair Ricks noted the difference between private versus public AI tools and the importance of keeping private data private. Mr. Smith expressed appreciation for their partnership with Information Technology Services in creating a framework with parameters and guidelines and what should be used in global AI versus private. Cochair Ricks reiterated the need for caution and the downsides to AI.

With no further business, the committee adjourned at 3:37 p.m.