

MINUTES  
**JOINT FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 04, 2025  
**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.  
**PLACE:** Room C310  
**MEMBERS:** Senators Co-Chair Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow  
Representatives Co-Chair Horman, Miller, Furniss, Handy, Petzke, Tanner (14), Manwaring, Mitchell, Price, Galaviz  
**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**Co-Chair Horman** called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Mr. Noah Peterson**, Analyst, LSO Budget & Policy, provided an overview of the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC), including its organizational structure. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** presented the FY 2025 supplemental and FY 2026 enhancement requests for IDOC. These supplemental and enhancement requests will be discussed during the presentation for each Division.

**Mr. Peterson** provided an overview of Management Services, including its organizational structure. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** presented the FY 2026 enhancement requests for Management Services totaling approximately \$3.3M. These budget enhancements include ongoing and onetime funds for computer hardware, software, and associated support; there are also requests for inflation costs and replacement items. These requests are recommended by the Governor. He noted the Division also supports the Governor's recommendation of \$85K in ongoing operating costs from the General Fund for a special assistant US attorney in North Idaho. These moneys would support local law enforcement with a specific focus on drug trafficking. The Governor's goal is to pilot this position for three years and then reevaluate the need.

In response to a committee question, **Mr. Peterson** clarified previous appropriations for the Recidiviz case management software were onetime funds to build the system. The FY 2026 request for \$1M ongoing will support the continuous development of the software.

**Mr. Josh Tewalt**, Director of the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC), answered committee questions. He explained Recidiviz is a nonprofit tech company focusing on improving data accessibility in correctional systems, particularly where outdated and disparate systems make data difficult to analyze. The company specializes in creating overlays, not full software programs, to bring data together in ways decision-makers and practitioners can easily understand. This helps automate processes, reducing the workload of staff, especially in probation and parole. As a nonprofit, Recidiviz leverages matching private funding to maximize impact in correctional systems.

In response to a committee question, **Dir. Tewalt** discussed the transparency software enhancement. This funding is aimed at covering operating costs for three areas: the Access to Courts (ATC) database, LexisNexis/law books, and GOVQA software. GOVQA is used by IDOC to track and respond to public records, intergovernmental, and constituent services requests as well as subpoenas. The ATC database fulfills IDOC's constitutional obligation to provide residents access to the courts, and the LexisNexis/law books ensure legal resources and case law are available to residents.

In response to committee questions about Recidiviz, **Dir. Tewalt** assured the committee IDOC controls the data and emphasized the goal is to understand outcomes and improve operations, not manipulate results. He acknowledged challenges with state funding but indicated IDOC seeks federal money for experimentation before requesting state funds. He explained IDOC, after exploring alternatives, believes no competitors in the space can provide the necessary data with minimal disruption, noting Recidiviz adapts to IDOC's needs. **Dir. Tewalt** also clarified while Recidiviz collaborates with philanthropy groups in the corrections space, it remains neutral, focusing on helping IDOC achieve its goals without advocacy involvement.

**Mr. Peterson** provided an overview of State Prisons, including its organizational structure. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** presented the FY 2025 supplemental and FY 2026 enhancement requests for State Prisons. He pointed out several of these supplemental and enhancement requests are in response to a violent incident last spring involving an ambush during an inmate transport to a hospital, which highlighted vulnerabilities in the system. IDOC is proposing several measures to address these vulnerabilities.

The FY 2025 onetime supplemental requests total nearly \$3M for advanced surveillance technology, transport safety expansion, and a body-worn camera grant. The FY 2026 enhancement requests total \$10.8M: \$4.5M in ongoing funds for advanced surveillance technology, transport safety expansion, and general inflation; and \$6.3M onetime for a body-worn camera grant, a skid steer, computer hardware, and replacement items. **Dir. Tewalt** explained which requests would come from federal funds and which from state funds; he pointed out the Governor's recommendation aligns with most IDOC requests but proposes contracting snow removal for Saint Anthony's instead of purchasing the skid steer, at a cost of \$30K in ongoing operating expenditures.

In response to committee questions, **Dir. Tewalt** clarified the initial request for the skid steer for St. Anthony was intended to address a seasonal need. IDOC is responsible for ensuring roads and parking lots at St. Anthony remain clear, to allow for proper ingress and egress to support transport needs around the correctional facility. The Governor recommends ongoing contracting for snow removal, rather than purchasing and owning the equipment.

In response to committee questions about the request for additional Full Time Positions (FTPs) for the Transport Safety Bureau, **Dir. Tewalt** explained emergency transports are managed by response teams (Alpha and Bravo), assigned per shift based on urgency. In high-risk situations, staff may be reassigned, and transport teams must be specially trained in firearms and medical emergencies. After the ambush incident, IDOC decided to have the Transport Bureau handle high-risk transports for specialized training and efficiency, instead of training all staff. The plan aims to balance security and efficiency while reducing excessive overtime, ensuring high-risk transports are handled properly.

In response to committee questions, **Dir. Tewalt** said the Legislature establishes policy for the state of Idaho. His responsibility is to implement the law within the Department of Correction.

**Co-Chair Horman** thanked **Dir. Tewalt** for working to find efficient and effective ways to prevent another incident and to protect his staff.

**Dir. Tewalt** made closing remarks and addressed the growing sophistication of contraband smuggling into prisons, particularly through drones. He highlighted the benefits of digitizing mail to close off a major entry point for contraband and emphasized the importance of using phone call transcription technology to monitor inmate communications. This technology, processing 60M minutes annually, will enhance security within facilities and support law enforcement efforts to disrupt criminal activities in the community, marking a significant advancement in corrections safety.

**Mr. Peterson** provided an overview of Community Corrections, including its organizational structure. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** presented the FY 2026 enhancement requests for Community Corrections. These budget enhancements include \$893K in ongoing funds for Pocatello Community Reentry Center (CRC) personnel annualization and general inflation and \$1.6M for replacement items. These requests are recommended by the Governor.

**Mr. Peterson** provided an overview of Community-Based Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment, including its organizational structure. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** noted the Division requested only maintenance changes for FY 2026 and did not request any budget enhancements.

In response to a committee question, **Dir. Tewalt** explained the purpose of a gap analysis is to assess the needs and available resources within the community, noting the large population affected by this Division.

**Mr. Peterson** provided overviews of County & Out-of-State Placement and Medical Services, including their organizational structures. He pointed out these two Divisions do not have FTPs assigned to them; the costs for these Divisions are population driven. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** presented the FY 2025 supplemental and FY 2026 enhancement requests for County & Out-of-State Placement and Medical Services. He explained the population forecast has changed and is now higher than original projected. The FY 2025 supplemental requests for approximately \$12M onetime addresses the difference between the original and current population projections for per diem costs. The FY 2026 ongoing population-driven adjustment requests approximately \$4M to cover higher per diem costs due to updated population projections. IDOC is negotiating a new medical contract, expecting a 10% cost increase if successful, or a 30-40% increase if the contract goes to bid. The FY 2026 requests are based on anticipated successful contract negotiations. Both adjustments were recommended by the Governor.

In response to a committee question, **Dir. Tewalt** explained the rates for county jails are set by the Legislature in Idaho Code. These higher rates are intended to motivate the State to transfer individuals from county jails so as to prevent a backlog.

**Dir. Tewalt** made closing remarks and emphasized the importance of investing in both helping individuals succeed and maintaining a strong prison system, noting a balance between accountability and support is necessary for success. **Co-Chair Grow** complemented Dir. Tewalt on effective management of a complicated Department; **Co-Chair Horman** agreed.

**Mr. Peterson** provided an overview of the Pardons & Parole Commission, including its organizational structure. He also examined the consolidated fund analysis, the five-year expenditures chart, FY 2024 expenditures by expense class, the five-year base snapshot, and the budget enhancements for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

**Mr. Peterson** presented the FY 2026 enhancement requests for the Pardons & Parole Commission. These budget enhancements include \$22K ongoing for Board Commissioner salary increases and \$13K for computer hardware. He noted the Governor supports these requests as well as an additional \$59K for Board Commissioner salary increases. The agency's request was limited to remain under the 3% General Fund threshold required by the Division of Financial Management. The Board Commissioners last received salary increases in 2017; the previous increase was in 2007.

**Ms. Christine Starr**, Executive Director of the Pardons & Parole Committee, answered committee questions. She explained parole hearings are generally scheduled three weeks a month, year-round. She clarified by statute, Commissioners are only compensated for the time spent in hearings, not for the necessary 3+ days of preparation for every five days of hearings. Dir. Starr emphasized the request for a salary increase is a temporary solution and stressed the need to address recruitment, retention, and proper training for Commissioners.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

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Representative Horman  
Chair

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Alyson Jackson  
Secretary