

**February 11, 2026**

The Idaho Falls Utility Board of the City of Idaho Falls met on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at the Idaho Falls Power Boardroom, 140 S. Capital, Idaho Falls, Idaho, at 8 a.m.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Announcements

**Present:**

Mayor Lisa Burtenshaw  
Board Member Jim Francis  
Board Member John Radford (Joined via Zoom)  
Board Member Michaelle Ziel-Dingman  
Board Member Kirk Larsen  
Board Member Jim Freeman  
Board Member Brandon Lee

**Also present:**

Stephen Boorman, Interim General Manager  
Jacob Beck, Assistant City Attorney  
Darin Jones, Human Resources Director  
Dee Glander, TextPower (Joined via Zoom)  
Michael Saragusa, TextPower (Joined via Zoom)  
Will Hart, Executive Director of Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities (Joined via Zoom)  
Chris Fredericksen, Public Works Director  
Josh Roos, Chief Financial Officer  
Jace Yancey, Operations Assistant General Manager  
Sarah Wheeler, External Affairs Manager  
Margaret Wimbourne, Chief of Staff (Joined via Zoom)  
Kimberly Felker, City Public Information Officer (Joined via Zoom)  
Linda Lundquist, Board Secretary

Mayor Burtenshaw called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Calendar, Announcements, Events and Updates

Board Member Freeman summarized Governor Little's State of the Union Budget report:

- 20% of the state's budget is in a rainy day fund
- Tariffs are a great challenge for small businesses
- Beef pricing is up 15%

He noted renewed interest in geothermal projects and requested an update from IGM Boorman regarding Idaho Falls Power's current project; no new developments were reported. Board Member Freeman shared that BPA Administrator John Hairston is retiring. IGM Boorman acknowledged Hairston's key role in finalizing the new BPA contracts and stated that Suzanne Cooper will serve as Interim Administrator pending a permanent appointment. He added that this will be a priority topic during upcoming Capitol Hill visits in Washington, D.C. Board Member Freeman also noted progress on the Columbia River Treaty.

Board Member Francis reported that COS Wimbourne is identifying office space for three council members and a small conference room for community meetings and asked interested council members to contact him. He also referenced proposed House Bill 596 from Representative Ehardt, which appears to allocate utility costs among ratepayers and taxpayers in city annexations, though the specific property prompting the bill is unclear. He indicated the Association of Idaho Cities is likely to oppose the measure. IGM Boorman will follow up with Representative Ehardt for additional information.

## **February 11, 2026**

Mayor Burtenshaw announced her appointment to the Governor's Energy Task Force, which will meet with local mayors in May.

### IFP General Manager Job Search Update

Director Jones outlined the timeline for Power's General Manager recruitment process, noting he plans to have the job posted today, running through March 20, and hopes to have a viable candidate for City Council's approval in early June.

### CRC Update

Ms. Wheeler outlined the services provided by Cooperative Response Center (CRC), explaining the utility's after-hours response operations and associated billing processes. She emphasized that CRC supports not only after-hours needs but also manages increased call volumes during major system outages.

### Outage Notification Process

Ms. Wheeler outlined Idaho Falls Power's ongoing efforts to enhance its customer notification process, ensuring timely and accurate communication during unplanned power outages. She noted that TextPower would be an effective tool for keeping the community informed, as its automated, text-based platform provides a faster and preferred method of communication.

Ms. Glander noted that CRC offers a TextPower texting package that would integrate well with existing services. In addition to unplanned outages, TextPower can provide notifications for planned outages. She cited industry data indicating that 97% of consumers own cell phones and 98% of text messages are read, and pointed out that many phone numbers on file may be outdated landlines. A demonstration was provided to show a sample TextPower message. Ms. Wheeler added that enhanced text notifications could reduce call volumes and associated costs to CRC. It was noted that residential customers are not currently called regarding turnoffs, and that Friday turnoffs can present challenges; billing cycles may need to shift to Mondays.

Board Member Freeman asked how customer contact information would remain current. Staff explained that as long as the CIS database is updated, contact lists can be refreshed in TextPower. While number changes are a common utility-wide issue, representatives can review delivery status if a customer reports not receiving a message. Integration with Survalent could allow for automated outage-triggered texts and help reduce workload across billing and other departments, while providing an additional customer touchpoint.

Board Member Francis inquired about costs. Staff indicated there would be an initial setup fee of approximately \$30,000, plus a monthly texting allotment. The Mayor asked whether staff intend to proceed; Ms. Glander confirmed she would bring the proposal forward and continue working offline on next steps.

### State Legislative Update

Will Hart, Executive Director of the Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association (ICUA), reported that ICUA represents utilities serving approximately 140,000 members, with about 16% of Idaho residents served by public power. Most members, aside from Idaho Falls Power, purchase the majority of their power from BPA. Mr. Hart noted that, to date, there has been limited energy-related legislation introduced. However, proposed state budget reductions of approximately 5% to most agencies beginning in 2027 could have significant impacts. The Legislature continues to negotiate budget measures, and several bills affecting municipal governance are advancing. ICUA remains focused on maintaining affordable and reliable power.

He highlighted legislation under review, including House Joint Resolution 8 and Senate Bill 103, which propose constitutional amendments related to public lands. ICUA is monitoring these efforts to ensure existing rights are protected. A draft bill to consolidate the Office of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Office of Species Conservation was described as a positive step toward streamlining state operations. House Bill 609, addressing data centers, would add additional safeguards to a tax credit enacted in 2020. ICUA is also closely monitoring potential large-load

**February 11, 2026**

legislation to ensure consumer-owned utilities are not grouped with investor-owned utilities, which the Public Utilities Commission regulates.

Regarding BPA leadership, Mr. Hart confirmed Administrator John Hairston's retirement and Suzanne Cooper's appointment as Interim Administrator. ICUA supports selecting a candidate with utility experience and ties to Idaho or Montana and does not favor an investor-owned utility representative for the role. While there is limited interest within ICUA in pursuing the position, qualified internal BPA candidates may be available. The appointment requires U.S. Senate confirmation, and Idaho's congressional delegation is well-positioned to advocate for the region's interests.

Mr. Hart also referenced ongoing federal litigation in Oregon related to regional energy costs, with a ruling expected on March 3. Approximately \$150 million in costs across the Pacific Northwest are at issue. In addition, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council is advancing its Fish and Wildlife Program, with a public hearing scheduled; ICUA plans to comment, particularly regarding spill measures. In response to questions, Mr. Hart indicated there has been no discussion of rolling back recent tax cuts.

#### Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer – Water Management

Director Fredericksen emphasized that expanding in-system water storage offers the greatest cost-benefit, citing the Teton Dam as a significant opportunity to improve water storage and reduce unused downstream flows. The Water Board remains actively involved in these discussions. It was noted that, although dam technology existed in 1976, construction deficiencies led to failure. In response to questions, he noted that additional storage, such as reconstructing the dam, could help reduce downstream claims and support future growth in Eastern Idaho.

Idaho's 11 groundwater districts play a critical role in maintaining aquifer health, alongside a coalition of cities addressing long-term sustainability. Discussion highlighted zero flows past Milner at times, with recharge permits submitted when flows are available. Concerns were raised regarding the fragmented administration of water and wastewater systems.

The Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, spanning approximately 10,800 square miles (about 13% of Idaho's landmass), stretching 250 miles from Ashton to Hagerman/Thousand Springs, and containing an estimated one billion acre-feet of water, continues to decline by roughly 250,000 acre-feet annually. Despite mitigation efforts, the current shortfall is approximately 334,000 acre-feet. Curtailment decisions, based on snowpack and water-year conditions, are expected in July; notably, curtailment occurred even in a strong water year last year, and this year is projected to be drier.

Groundwater usage has decreased, with average city use at approximately 2,550 acre-feet annually. The city operates 21 municipal wells, but typically runs four. Approved mitigation efforts include recharge at two sites: a gravel pit north of Sandy Downs via Sand Creek, and the former ITD pit at 65th South on York Road using a siphon system. Additional recharge in northern gravel areas is planned. Most local golf courses already utilize surface water.

#### PW Q4 Financial and Annual Reports

Director Fredericksen reported that the department follows a conservative budgeting approach, estimating revenues cautiously and expenditures conservatively.

Current fund balances are as follows:

- **Water Fund:** \$25,946,028
- **Sanitation Fund:** \$8,331,656 (Before this year, rates have not been increased in approximately 10 years.)
- **Wastewater Fund:** \$23,642,262

He noted that revenues are trending above projections due to continued growth, while expenditures remain below budget. Additionally, a contractor is working with alternative polymers at the wastewater facility to improve solids processing efficiency, with a goal of increasing from 12% to 15%.

**February 11, 2026**

IFP Q4 Financial and Annual Reports

CFO Roos reviewed Idaho Falls Power's financial report.

**Power Fund:**

Cash reserves are maintained in three categories: operating (day-to-day), Rate Stabilization, and CIP. Total cash increased to \$67.8 million, up from \$60.5 million last year; however, a drawdown began in fall 2024 to fund the peaking plant project. Total current liabilities decreased by \$2.3 million, reflecting higher bill payments in 2024 compared to 2025. Revenue bond payments for transmission and power supply remain on schedule, and once bonds are issued, funds must be fully drawn. Unlike general obligation bonds, power revenue bonds do not require a public election.

Retail Sales increased by \$4 million from the prior year, although power revenues and developer connection fees decreased. Total Operating Revenue was \$78 million, Operating Expenses ended at \$62 million, with Operating Income at \$16 million. Power supply expenses ended at 95% of budget, while revenues from surplus power sales are 45% above projections. Total system load reached 812 MW, up from 794 MW last year. Winter peak demand declined, while summer peaks continue to rise due to increased air-conditioning use; the system set peak demand for four consecutive months last summer. The City Plant is scheduled to go offline this year for refurbishment. Term trades will be discussed at a future board meeting.

**Grants and Projects:**

Work will continue on the downtown alleyway grant project. EV charging infrastructure has been bid for construction, with equipment currently stored at the peaking plant facility. Energy efficiency initiatives include pathway lighting in South Tourist Park and installation of decorative LED lighting; additional coordination is planned for continued lighting improvements.

**Fiber Fund:**

Fiber cash reserves grew throughout the year but declined in September following the first fiber payment to the Power Fund and contractor payments under the 10-year repayment schedule. A reduction in liabilities reflects loan payments. Financials were restated to reclassify work-in-progress assets into infrastructure. The system now serves 9,377 customers with a 35% take rate. The long-term goal remains achieving a 50% market share, including expansion into new developments.

CFO Roos also reviewed recent accomplishments and capital projects.

Feedback on Utility Board Meetings

Mayor Burtenshaw recommended shifting future board meetings toward more reporting and less training. She also noted that the March meeting will be held in the City Annex conference room. She advised that City Parks will be completing work on the bridge connecting Friendship Park, and IGM Boorman stated that the forebay water level can be lowered as necessary to accommodate the project.

IGM Boorman referenced two upcoming Council memos and explained that one project is rejecting all bids received. At this time, there are no plans to rebid, as minor modifications will be completed to improve the workspace.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:14 p.m.

s/ Linda Lundquist \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Lundquist, BOARD SECRETARY

s/ Lisa Burtenshaw \_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Burtenshaw, MAYOR