

**January 30, 2020**

The Idaho Falls Power Board of the City of Idaho Falls met Thursday, January 30, 2020, at the Idaho Falls Power Conference Room, 140 S. Capital, Idaho Falls, Idaho at 8:45 a.m.

**Call to Order, Roll Call, and Announcements:**

There were present:

Board Member Thomas Hally  
Board Member Jim Francis  
Board Member Jim Freeman  
Board Member John Radford  
Board Member Michelle Ziel-Dingman

Absent:

Mayor Rebecca L. Noah Casper  
Board Member Shelly Smede

Also present:

Bear Prairie, Idaho Falls Power (IFP) General Manager  
Stephen Boorman, IFP Assistant General Manager  
Randy Fife, City Attorney  
Chris Fredericksen, Public Works (PW) Director  
Linda Lundquist, IFP Executive Assistant

Mayor Pro Tem Ziel-Dingman called the meeting to order at 8:52 a.m. with the following items:

**Calendar, Announcements, and Events Update:**

Mayor Pro Tem Ziel-Dingman announced that Mayor Casper was on travel in Boise, Idaho.

**Updates from Board Members:**

Board Member Francis asked a question about a consent agenda item for the City Council meeting later that evening, regarding a credit given by the vendor and Board Member Freeman asked about the need for a consent agenda item that was a quote for a load bank rental for IFP. AGM Boorman explained the need for the load bank and memo.

**Utility Reports:**

*Fiber* – GM Prairie stated that the take rates for fiber were better than projected overall. AGM Boorman added that there's a need for micro-advertising where fiber is actually available.

**Net Metering:**

GM Prairie explained that net-metering is designed to net-out customers when they add solar and/or wind and that special meter settings with two registers is required when power is flowing in both directions. According to IFP policy, if a customer generates more energy than they consume, they will be paid back the wholesale energy rate as stated in the City fee ordinance. He added that there are limits to the size of generation and Board Member Hally asked what determines the cost? GM Prairie answered that the *Cost of Service* determines the cost. He continued to explain that the City of Idaho Falls saw a spike in solar sales in 2018 and 2019 likely due to out-of-state sales companies aggressively marketing solar power and noted that new legislation has caused some of those companies to leave the state due to increased liability for false marketing/sales claims. He said that IFP conducts free solar energy evaluations that include recommended system sizes and encourages customers to compare the report to solar companies' proposals. He continued

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to say that if a customer builds an oversized system and violates the size requirement, that the utility won't pay the overage energy sales to the customer if the new service policy is adopted at the next Council meeting. This is one of the proposed changes to the service policy. Board Member Freeman asked how long a solar rooftop system lasts and GM Prairie answered that they will typically last 20 years, but likely about 14 years due the panels losing energy production as they age and new technology making it cost effective to upgrade panels.

Service Policy Review and Update:

AGM Boorman stated that the service policy is a living document and should be reviewed annually which IFP staff does. He noted that last year a section covering 5G was added and in the recent 2020 review, some clarifying language added to that section. Also included in the 2020 review, was an addition requiring external main disconnects on new residential construction. This is a safety feature where firefighters can de-energize a structure externally by themselves along with other benefits. This is also a requirement in the new 2020 electrical code that Idaho may adopt. AGM Boorman continued to say that a contractor meeting will be held in order to notify contractors of the changes. Board Member Radford asked if there is a way to notify the customer of the changes when they apply for a building construction permit? There was not general consensus with staff on how to make that happen efficiently. GM Prairie added that IFP will likely send notices with the new City requirements to local electric supply houses.

Board Policy 17-POL-01 Review and Discussion:

GM Prairie reviewed the Payment in Lieu of Taxes policy and stated that he agrees the in-kind language is complex and not needed with what we currently do in practice now. There is a lot of historical items in the current policy that add complexity and that is likely not the path we need to keep. He explained that we moved to a cleaner process years ago where it was dollars that go to the general fund based upon what the City would generally receive from a for-profit and if other departments want things done they go through Council or pay IFP for the services. He stated that he would like to discuss the percentage rate in more detail at the next meeting and we will continue to review the policy annually so the changes that we make to the policy are not set in stone forever and we can continue to improve the policy to establish fairness for the general fund and utility while maintaining discipline to stay within the bounds allowed. GM Prairie will bring a redline draft based upon this discussion to the next board meeting for review and discussion.

Traffic Signalization Enhancements:

GM Prairie led the discussion by stating that traffic signals are shown as an asset on City balance sheets and are maintained by the City and utility with departments working together on a five-year Capital Plan. PW Director Fredericksen, stated that it is very cost-effective to control how traffic moves through a city and the idea is to move from a more standard operational system to a state-of-the-art technology and in fact, there's a good percentage of traffic systems nationwide that are moving toward 24-hour reporting. He added that he has set aside \$220,000 to upgrade signals and \$60,000 for traffic monitoring. Additionally, there is free software available that UDOT uses and it would cost the City about \$20,000 to purchase the hardware and pay for consulting support with installation. GM Prairie added that the fiber backbone in the City will allow us to have one of the most state-of-the-art traffic systems in the state. PW Director Fredericksen stated that even with 24-hour notifications, we still need to hire a traffic engineer to act on what is reporting. He said that people will call in and report failing traffic signals and that often it ends up being the detection system that is broken. He continued to explain that the current City engineer is also certified as a traffic engineer, but with growing City demands he has less and less time to respond to needed traffic work. PW Director Fredericksen added that IFP has an unfilled position that he would like to use to fill as a traffic engineering position. GM Prairie added that the traffic engineer would be an IFP employee and work in coordination with Public Works. He said that currently, IFP electricians maintain the traffic signals and

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complex boxes, but a traffic engineer would consider the whole picture. He continued to explain that instead of just looking at the cameras to detect issues, a new system would continually monitor traffic and identify issues for a traffic engineer to respond to. GM Prairie mentioned that Public Works is working with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to take over operation of their traffic lights and street lights for better continuity within the City and that an actionable item will be brought to City Council in the near future. Board Member Hally eluded that if a road turns into a highway that the street lights and traffic signals are probably owned by the state. PW Director Fredericksen said that public works gets maintenance calls continually from the community and ITD on their own signal issues owned/controlled by ITD, however, with the ITD plan combined with the proposal for a new system and a traffic engineer to monitor it, the City would gain control over the entire system. Board Member Radford concurred that the City's fiber capabilities are always going to help to manage traffic and asked what the lifetime of fiber is? GM Prairie answered that the fiber is made of glass and they really have not found a lifespan to the actual fiber because fiber that was laid 30 years ago is still perfectly good, so it would just be the electronics that would have to be upgraded in the system. He continued to say that IFP has the funds in the 2019/20 budget for the traffic engineer and would like a general head nod on the current plan to move forward with. There was general agreement of the Board that this plan of action is prudent.

Utility Reports:

*Federal and State Regulation/Legislation* – GM Prairie talked about the new fiber legislation that is working its way through the State capital and noted that it is pushing for a level playing field. He added that the buyout legislation with Rocky Mountain Power is in committee. Board Member Radford stated that IFP buyouts seem well under the million-dollar threshold, and if passed would be really helpful to the utility.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

s/ Linda Lundquist \_\_\_\_\_

Linda Lundquist, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

s/ Rebecca L. Noah Casper \_\_\_\_\_

Rebecca L. Noah Casper, MAYOR