The meeting is a fiscal year 2027 budget workshop focused on the West Valley Humane Society (WVHS), attended by county commissioners, legal staff, and representatives from the cities of Caldwell and Nampa, along with WVHS leadership. [0:02] [0:15] [1:31]

WVHS leadership introduces themselves: board treasurer Chris Hyde, executive director Emily Gamble (with four years at the shelter, starting at the front desk), and Nampa Police Captain Eric Skogland. [0:45] [1:02] [1:14]

Current shelter operations: WVHS currently has about 300 animals in care, including 87 dogs (about 80% of dog capacity), 217 cats (with 57 in-shelter, over cat capacity), and one chicken. They have been operating between 60–100% of capacity this year. [3:11] [3:24] [3:43] They are improving internal reporting, including tracking where strays come from using the Canyon County web assessor's map and cross streets, and maintaining a running database of pickup locations. [9:53] [10:04] [10:10] [10:23]

Financial status: WVHS is currently in the black for the fiscal year, but this is driven by several large one-time donations and a bequest, plus some cost savings from staff attrition and vacancies. Excluding these, operations are near breakeven, which is their target, with reserves built from larger fundraising and one-time gifts. [3:43] [4:03] [4:24] They have about $320,000 in cash and $30,000 in liabilities, representing roughly 75 days of expenses; their long-term goal is six months of reserves. [5:38] Finances have stabilized largely due to additional support from governmental partners. [6:04]

Recent changes and partnerships: WVHS has solidified a partnership with PetSmart, which includes financial support and adoption center space in Boise, expected to add capacity for about 30 animals in calendar year 2027. [6:29] [14:43] They filled the executive director role, allowing more focus on corporate partnerships and fundraising. [6:29] [6:54] Bookkeeping has been outsourced to a U.S.-based firm, improving record quality and automating about half of invoice processing. [6:54] [7:26] They completed a major decluttering and cleaning project; commissioners and the Caldwell mayor note the facility is now clean, professional, and "completely unrecognizable in a good way" compared to three years ago. [7:47] [8:15] [33:10] [33:18] [33:36] [34:01]

WVHS has a new (used) van via Team Subaru for animal transport and continues a fundraising/PR partnership with the Boise Open. [8:15] They are doing more to support cats in the community and have increased partnerships with regional rescues, sometimes swapping animals and overall being a net exporter of animals. [8:46] [9:08]

Public perception and outreach: After an "aborted Copper Quill transition," adoption revenues and donations have recovered more slowly than expected, partly due to community confusion and a misconception that the shelter no longer exists. [4:59] [11:25] [11:37] WVHS is increasing public presence through events and PR releases (e.g., for the Idaho Gives fundraiser) and rebuilding community connections. [11:37] [11:49] [11:58] They request help from governmental partners' communication channels to reinforce that WVHS is operating and supported. [12:07] A commissioner notes prior negative media “spotlights” were inaccurate and harmful to the shelter’s future. [12:31]

Veterinary capacity and community programs: WVHS’s major constraint is hiring a full-time veterinarian; consistent vet staffing is the main blocker to expanding low-cost spay/neuter and community cat programs. [13:23] [15:00] Currently they rely on “day rate” vets—retired or part-time veterinarians who come in for limited days to perform spay/neuter and checks—resulting in inconsistent on-site vet coverage (some weeks one day, others three). [20:33] Veterinary supply and medicine costs have risen significantly, driven by broader economic conditions and planned expansion of services such as community spay/neuter. [14:11] [19:29] [19:56] They are interested in partnering with the University of Idaho or other educational institutions for vet interns, but this requires a full-time licensed vet on staff to supervise, which they do not yet have. [30:33] [30:57] [31:08] [31:27] [31:30] They are actively recruiting a vet through multiple networks, but describe the hiring environment as very difficult and competitive. [17:31] [17:55] [31:57] [32:14]

Budget request and cost drivers: WVHS requests an incremental increase of about $50,000 in governmental support, roughly a 5% increase, allocated pro rata based on current contributions. [16:30] Overall expenses are projected to increase by about $130,000 (7.5%) compared to the prior budget, driven mainly by positions that were only partially funded last year (e.g., the director and backfill roles), additional incremental positions, and cost-of-living and overdue raises for staff who have not had increases in at least two years. [16:53] [24:47] [25:16] They target a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for staff. [25:34] A key goal is to offer a competitive salary to recruit and retain a full-time vet in a tight market, plus one additional staff member to support the new adoption center. [17:31] [17:55] They emphasize that retaining experienced staff has allowed them to operate with lower headcount than expected, though they cannot run indefinitely with a skeleton crew. [18:27] [19:01]

Clinic and other operating costs: Clinic expenses are rising due to higher veterinary supply costs and expanded services, but WVHS expects some offset from reduced spending on outside veterinary services as more care is handled in-house. [19:29] [19:56] They plan to significantly increase the staff training budget, especially to support continuing education for veterinary roles, an area they acknowledge has been underfunded. [21:43] Other rising costs include liability and workers’ compensation insurance, credit card fees (driven by more card usage), utilities, and general inflation tied to adoption volume. [22:13] The chair suggests WVHS coordinate with the county comptroller to reduce credit card fees by leveraging county contracts, noting the county’s own experience with excessive fees. [22:58] [23:23] [23:28] [24:01] WVHS already offers adopters the option to cover credit card fees at checkout, with mixed uptake. [24:03] [24:17]

Facility maintenance and reserves: WVHS raises the issue of the county’s annual maintenance fund for the building. They no longer seek year-end distribution of unused funds to WVHS, but propose that unspent maintenance funds be retained for future facility investments (renovations, unexpected major repairs) rather than reverting elsewhere. [25:47] [26:16] The building is about

25 years old, and they have recently faced issues such as HVAC problems, irrigation leaks, and rusting doors, all of which can be costly. [15:30] [26:40] [27:37] [28:00] [28:19] [28:36] They stress this is long-term planning (5–10 years) rather than an immediate expansion, and note the site likely cannot accommodate a larger footprint, which is why they seek alternative space like the PetSmart adoption center. [15:00] [15:30] [15:58] [27:37] [28:00] A commissioner supports the idea of planning for "rainy day" reserves for large assets. [29:01] [29:10]

Governance, transparency, and feedback: WVHS offers a detailed line-by-line budget (starting on page 11 of the attachment) and is open to further review and a "round two" discussion with commissioners and city partners. [29:17] [32:48] [34:07] [34:27] [34:59] Commissioners and the Caldwell mayor praise WVHS's progress, cleanliness, professionalism, and staff responsiveness, contrasting it favorably with conditions three years prior. [33:10] [33:18] [33:33] [33:36] [33:52] [34:01] WVHS expresses appreciation for increased governmental support, calling it crucial to stabilizing operations, and welcomes suggestions like the credit card fee idea and other constructive feedback. [35:10] [35:19] [35:44]

Cost-sharing concerns from Nampa: Captain Skogland reports that since April he has been receiving monthly intake numbers from WVHS. For April and May, Caldwell had the highest intake (111 and 78 animals respectively), with Nampa second (70 and 51), and another Canyon County jurisdiction third. [36:05] [36:23] [36:39] [37:00] [37:29] He notes that under the proposed budget, Nampa's cost would rise by $24,000 to $504,000, while total governmental contributions are about $1,040,000, meaning Nampa would pay close to half the total despite not being the top user. [38:03] He has written to each governing body requesting a more equitable cost-sharing model, suggesting a three-way equal split (~$346,687 each for county, Caldwell, and Nampa), though he cannot commit Nampa's council to this yet. [38:45] [39:14] He anticipates resistance from Nampa leadership to the $504,000 figure and emphasizes the importance of usage data to justify costs. [39:47] He also stresses that a single countywide shelter is the most cost-effective solution for taxpayers and that visible governmental partnership boosts donor confidence in WVHS's stability and longevity. [40:22] [41:06]

Caldwell's perspective and animal control staffing: The Caldwell mayor acknowledges Caldwell's high intake numbers and notes they are running two animal control officers (one in training, one full-time), with budget for a third, and will be watching analytics over time. [41:58] [42:13] [42:16] [42:21] [42:33] [42:49] [43:06] He reiterates Caldwell's support for contributing to the shelter while remaining mindful of taxpayer dollars and expresses interest in continuing the cost-sharing partnership. [42:33] [42:49]

Next steps: The county will take the WVHS budget and presentation under advisement, review the granular budget, and meet again with Caldwell and Nampa to refine positions before a second workshop with WVHS for clarification and further discussion. [34:07] [34:27] [34:59] [43:08] [43:29] The meeting concludes with a motion to adjourn, which passes.