

## [County supervisors voice support for animal shelter JPA](#)

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The Yolo County Board of Supervisors unanimously gave the green light on Tuesday to begin forming a joint powers authority to build and manage a new animal shelter.

Tuesday's action follows meetings in November between representatives of the county as well as the cities of Davis, Winters, Woodland and West Sacramento and UC Davis about the status of the current shelter, operational needs and designs for a new shelter.

Now each of those other jurisdictions will vote on whether or not to move forward with formation of a joint powers authority as well.

"I would characterize this as an initial baby step toward shared governance," County Administrator Patrick Blacklock told supervisors on Tuesday.

"It's really just getting the conceptual green light to go actually develop an agreement," he said.

Discussions about building a new shelter have been ongoing for years, particularly in the wake of a report by the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program six years ago that found the current 50-year-old shelter in Woodland not only inadequate and outdated but unable to meet shelter medicine best practices.

A nonprofit — Unleashing The Possibilities — has been raising funds for a state-of-the-art shelter and Indigo Architects has created designs for a new shelter based on the findings of the Koret Shelter Medicine report.

Before any actual shelter can be built, however, the process of forming a joint powers authority must take place.

That process would begin with creation of a governance model laying out the charge and scope of the JPA, including powers, membership and voting structure.

Ultimately, if all is agreed upon, focus would turn to shelter location and design, financing and a budget.

Currently the Woodland animal shelter is managed by the Yolo County Sheriff's Department, which contracts with other jurisdictions to provide animal services.

The advantage of a JPA, Supervisor Jim Provenza of Davis noted, is that participants like the city of Davis would have greater say in management.

“We’ve been struggling with this for the last several years,” Provenza said. “I think it’s clear to everybody that the existing shelter is inadequate and we’ve also lacked a governance structure. I appreciate the sheriff running it for all of these years, but there isn’t actually a governance structure, so if the city doesn’t like something... they’re not part of running it. The idea here is to have the county as well as any cities that want to participate be part of a joint power authority to make those decisions and hopefully move forward on one of a number of options to build a new shelter and create better shelter services.”

“I’m in complete agreement,” said Supervisor Gary Sandy of Woodland. “I think we’ve reached a point here where this is long overdue. We need to do it for the future of the county and the different communities.

“It’s obvious to me,” Sandy added, “that the existing shelter is long past its shelf life and we really need to move into an era where we think about animal services in a broader context and probably in a more citizen-oriented way than perhaps we have in the past. There are a lot of opportunities for educating people about proper animal care, what that means, what the responsibilities include and I think this is a golden opportunity to do that.”

Molly Gamboni, a longtime volunteer at the current shelter, urged the board to move forward with a JPA as well.

The current facility, she said, “is an antiquated and pretty inhumane place for animals, by no fault of the shelter staff. They do the best that they can.”

“It is perpetually damp,” she said. “There are water leaks in many of the kennels where the dogs basically live wet on the cement... and the dogs have limited exercise. Most get out for a period of 15 minutes a day if they’re lucky in a 24-hour period, so to us, it’s essentially solitary confinement.

“We need this new shelter so badly.”

Whether a new shelter comes to fruition remains to be seen, but on Tuesday county supervisors voted unanimously to take the first step in that process, and will now wait to see which cities vote to join them.