New animal shelter moves closer to reality

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / October 24, 2025

Construction of a new Calaveras County animal shelter took another step forward last week as the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to seek a loan from the California Infrastructure Economic Development Bank, IBank for short.

According to a staff memo, adopting the resolution did not create a general fund obligation. “It simply authorizes continued negotiations. Final loan terms and conditions will be presented to the Board for approval before any financial commitment is made.”

Engineers have estimated construction costs of a new shelter at $13 million with an estimated funding gap of $9.9 million from the money the county has already set aside for the project.

The existing animal shelter has been under grand jury scrutiny for nearly two decades. The jury’s 2023 report entitled “Teaching An Old Dog New Tricks,” said, “the shelter is understaffed, unsanitary, underfunded, overcrowded, as well as unappealing and in need of replacement.”

The resolution was passed at the Oct.14 meeting under the consent agenda with no discussion on the item.

The board at its Sept.9 meeting considered several options to finance construction of the shelter such as seeking grants or asking county voters to approve a bond measure.

No grant sources have been found to support construction of a new shelter and it is questionable whether voters would approve a bond measure for the project.

IBank offers low interest loans through its Infrastructure State Revolving Fund Program. The animal shelter qualifies as an eligible project under the loan guidelines and Calaveras County is an eligible borrower.

According to its website, IBank was created in 1994 to finance public infrastructure and private development that promote a healthy climate for jobs, contribute to a strong economy and improve the quality of life in California communities.

IBank has broad authority to issue tax-exempt and taxable revenue bonds, provide financing to public agencies, provide credit enhancements, acquire or lease facilities, and leverage state and federal funds. IBank’s current programs include the Infrastructure State Revolving Fund Loan Program, Expanding Venture Capital Access Program, the Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan fund, Small Business Finance Center and the Bond Financing Program.

The county could finance construction of the new animal shelter over a 20- to 30-year period.