

Beltrami Humane Society

Strategic Plan

Serving the Best Interest of the Animals

2013 - 2016

Revised January 2014



Acknowledgements

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Beltrami Humane Society

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Executive Summary

The Beltrami Humane Society's Board of Directors and Executive Director, with the help of other stakeholders, have created this strategic plan to guide the organization for the years 2013 – 2016. The plan is the result of planning sessions, surveys, and years of dealing with many of the same strategic issues. The plan consists of ten strategic goals, as well as ten strategies to achieve those goals. Additionally, performance measures to track progress toward the accomplishment of those goals, and specific actions to implement the strategies, have been developed.

The ten goals devised during the planning process are as follows:

1. Free Exchange and Development of Ideas
2. Diversity of Human Resources
3. Active Involvement in the Community
4. Positive Public Image
5. Organizational Structure Aligned with Vision & Mission
6. Financial Sustainability
7. Financial Stability
8. Highest Quality Care for Our Animals
9. Empowering Work Environment
10. Be a Responsible Resource for the Community

Consistently monitoring progress on the goals listed above is paramount to achieving them. Performance measures have been created for each goal. These measures involve the collection and reporting of data, observations, trends, and stakeholder assessments. The information collected will be reviewed regularly by the Humane Society's Board of Directors (see Appendix E).

The ten strategies devised to achieve the goals are as follows:

1. Improve our public image
2. Launch a volunteer program
3. Create a strong Board of Directors
4. Be prepared for emergencies
5. Establish proper procedures
6. Define our purpose
7. Manage the facility and grounds

8. Create professional alliances
9. Demonstrate appreciation to our supporters
10. Increase funding

Strategic actions have been devised for each strategy. When considering each strategy, the actions are the answer to the question, "How do we do that?" Creating specific actions also helps in determining an operating plan for daily work toward the achievement of the goals.

The success of the strategies and goals outlined above is dependent upon many factors. Some of those factors, such as the overall economic climate are out of the control of the organization. What can be controlled is the commitment of those who believe in the mission of the Beltrami Humane Society. For this plan to have any real significance in the health and success of the organization, the officers, staff, and volunteers must dedicate themselves to carrying out its strategies. They must also be willing to regularly review its contents, measure progress, and determine whether aspects of the plan remain relevant to the organization.

History

The Beltrami Humane Society was established in 1977 by a group of concerned citizens who felt a need for an organization that would provide shelter to homeless animals. The Humane Society is considered a “no-kill” shelter. The “no-kill” policy ensures that animals are not euthanized just to make room for other animals.

Since its inception, the Beltrami Humane Society has helped over 10,000 animals with a second chance at life. Every year, quality care is provided for hundreds of abandoned, unwanted, and stray animals.

Mission

The Beltrami Humane Society is committed to serving the best interest of the animals we strive to protect.

Vision

The Beltrami Humane Society is dedicated to operating an animal shelter for the purpose of finding a quality forever home for each animal we serve, encouraging a community of responsible companion animal guardians, eliminating the community's need to euthanize dogs and cats as a means of population control, and promoting a society where companion animals become more valued.

Introduction

Planning for this strategic initiative began sometime in early 2012. The Board of Directors needed to hire an executive director to lead the organization and resolve other threats to the health of the organization. The Board met with a consultant to discuss potential director candidates and strategic issues facing the organization. Many of those issues were the foundation for the strategies outlined in this report. The director was hired in May of 2012 and a decision was made to expand on the planning already completed to create a three year strategic plan. The Board of Directors, along with the Executive Director, held two planning sessions; one in December of 2012 and one in March of 2013. These sessions focused on reviewing the external and internal environments in which the Humane Society exists, and on creating goals for the future. Additionally, a short survey was sent out to staff, volunteers, and members of the Humane Society in January of 2013. The responses to those surveys were incorporated into the planning process.

The greatest impetus of the planning process was organizational turmoil that was threatening the existence of the Humane Society. Near the end of 2011, the Humane Society was without a director, and was facing tens of thousands of dollars of outstanding debt. The Board recognized that if the organization could recover from its large financial burdens, a plan for the future would be necessary to not only ensure its existence, but foster success into the future. The Board of Directors believed strongly in the mission of the organization, and made a commitment to focus on making a greater impact in the community. Because of the obvious support that the community had shown the Humane Society over the years, the Board was confident that a well-managed facility with a comprehensive plan could provide more and better services for both the community and the animals it serves.

This plan is the result of the faith and foresight of a number of individuals who believe in caring for companion animals. It is intended to be used as a guide for the actions of the staff and volunteers of the organization from mid-2013 to mid-2016. Progress in meeting the goals outlined in this plan is expected and will be reviewed periodically. The plan is meant to be a living plan, and should be adjusted throughout its three year life span. Ultimately, the plan will ensure that the Beltrami Humane Society is doing everything possible to serve the community of Bemidji and all of Northern Minnesota. This plan was created to "serve the best interests of the animals we strive to protect."

Strategic Goals

The Beltrami Humane Society has identified ten specific goals to work toward during the years 2013 – 2016. These goals were determined through the process of strategic planning and reflect the organization’s commitment to serving the best interest of the animals. They were devised not only with the desires of the Board of Directors in mind, but also the many other stakeholders of the organization. These goals will be a guidepost for the organization, its staff, and volunteers as they make choices that affect the organization. The goals are presented in no particular order and none is seen as more important than any other. Each is important, and should help the organization realize its vision and achieve its mission.

The Beltrami Humane Society’s ten strategic goals are as follows:

1. Free Exchange and Development of Ideas
2. Diversity of Human Resources
3. Active Involvement in the Community
4. Positive Public Image
5. Organizational Structure Aligned with Vision & Mission
6. Financial Sustainability
7. Financial Stability
8. Highest Quality Care for Our Animals
9. Empowering Work Environment
10. Be a Responsible Resource for the Community

Strategic Goal: Free Exchange and Development of Ideas

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to create an environment in which ideas are openly brought forth, shared, and developed. An organization which is open to new ideas and fosters creativity is much more likely to successfully handle challenges both seen and unseen. The danger of becoming an organization closed to multiple perspectives is real and threatens the Humane Society's ability to adequately care for the animals. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Encouraging a diversity of ideas
- Involving more people on the Board of Directors and in committees
- Making informed decisions on matters affecting the organization

Strategic Goal: Diversity of Human Resources

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to attract and retain a diversity of volunteers, staff, and board members. A large quantity of committed individuals is a valuable resource to any nonprofit organization. More people helping with the variety of tasks done on a regular basis eases the burden on everyone. Additionally, utilizing individuals with a variety of backgrounds, skills, and knowledge will allow the organization to access greater resources. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Diversifying individuals working on the committees
- Reducing burnout among Board Members and volunteers
- Attracting and retaining more volunteers

Strategic Goal: Active Involvement in the Community

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to be actively involved in the local Bemidji community as well as Greater Northern Minnesota. The Bemidji community and animal welfare community of Northern Minnesota provide a breadth of knowledge and resources. Actively engaging these groups will help build strong relationships and create opportunities to further the impact of the Beltrami Humane Society. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Having a broader reach in to the community
- Creating a network of organizational resources
- Accessing skills and advice
- Becoming more visible in the local community

Strategic Goal: Positive Public Image

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to earn a positive image among community members and organizations. A nonprofit organization may only exist as long as its community believes in the service provided and therefore supports the organization. Being viewed positively by the community is crucial to earning that support. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Gaining more members
- Increasing credibility among community members and organizations
- Increasing adoptions

Strategic Goal: Organizational Structure Aligned with Vision and Mission

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to align all aspects of the organization with its mission. All decisions and actions of a nonprofit organization should be rooted in the mission of that organization. It is important to not only be clear about that mission, but also to create structures and procedures that prevent straying from its mission and purpose. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Having a clear message for the public
- Having a shared focus for Humane Society programs
- Staying focused on mission-centered activities
- Providing order and management

Strategic Goal: Financial Sustainability

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to financially sustain the organization in the long term. Many organizations operate on a month to month, or even week to week basis without security for the future. Operating in this fashion is risky because any financial emergency can threaten the existence of the organization. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Having adequate financial reserves
- Maintaining an open line of credit with the bank
- Maintaining positive relationships with our account holders

Strategic Goal: Financial Stability

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to maintain financial stability for regular operations. In an economically tumultuous time, it is challenging for any business or nonprofit to remain financially stable. However, using a variety of funding sources and strategies can help alleviate the stress of economic swings. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Properly managing and controlling expenses
- Increasing total number of donors
- Retaining a higher percentage of donors
- Maintaining a low debt ratio

Strategic Goal: Highest Quality Care for Our Animals

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to provide the highest quality care for the animals at our facility. A shelter environment can be a stressful place for any homeless animal. High amounts of stress can lead to health problems, depression, and anxiety. The better the care provided for the animals, the happier the animals will be, and the better chance they have of being placed in a permanent home. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Gradually improving the physical facility in a way that reflects the mission
- Providing a better overall experience for each animal that comes to the shelter
- Engaging local veterinarians for check-ups of the shelter facility

Strategic Goal: Empowering Work Environment

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to foster an empowering work environment. A workplace which encourages its employees to take initiative and take ownership for their work will be more likely to see a happy, hard-working, productive staff than a workplace which does not. An empowering work environment will also attract more qualified employees and be more likely to increase retention. Further aspects of this goal include:

- Maintaining consistent staff attendance
- Engaging volunteers by staff members
- Holding each other accountable for our actions
- Attracting and retaining qualified employees

Strategic Goal: Be a Responsible Resource to the Community

It is the goal of the Beltrami Humane Society to be a responsible resource to the local Bemidji community and Greater Northern Minnesota. People have the reasonable expectation that an animal shelter is prepared for its own emergencies, and will be ready to help should the community have an emergency. The Beltrami Humane Society is committed to planning and utilizing its resources to be a source of assistance for its animals, and the community's animals.

Further aspects of this goal include:

- Keeping the animals in the shelter safe
- Managing the unexpected without chaos
- Being accountable for the security of animals

Performance Measurement

The Beltrami Humane Society is determined to make progress toward the realization of the goals outlined above. To ensure that progress is being made, to identify potential obstacles, and to respond to any lack of progress, the Humane Society has developed several performance measures for each strategic goal. The measures are based on available information, visible trends, stakeholder assessments, and observations related to each goal area.

The measures as they are presented in this report are vague in nature. Further definition of many of the measures is necessary to give them real meaning in relation to this strategic plan. However, each of the measures serves as a starting point for assessing progress in its goal area. Regular monitoring of the measures and the information they produce is planned by the Humane Society's Board of Directors (see Appendix E).

Performance Measures: Free Exchange and Development of Ideas

- An annual survey of the members, volunteers, and staff soliciting ideas.
- Total number of ideas placed in the "feedback box" on a monthly basis.
- A Board Matrix showing the skill sets of board members
- The total number of individuals on each committee

Performance Measures: Diversity of Human Resources

- The total number of unique individuals on each committee
- A Board Matrix showing the skill sets of board members
- Total volunteer hours per month

Performance Measurement: Active Involvement in the Community

- Total number of media hits (radio spots, newspaper articles, tv news stories)
- Asking adopters how they heard about us
- Total number of community presentations
- Total number of new volunteers each month
- Total number of retained volunteers each month

Performance Measurement: Positive Public Image

- An annual survey of the members, volunteers, and staff soliciting feedback
- Post adoption surveys
- Percentage of volunteers retained during the year
- Regular report from Board Members about what they hear in the community
- Creation of facilities plan and report on progress

Performance Measurement: Organizational Structure Aligned with Vision and Mission

- An annual Board retreat to review focus of the organization
- Annual review of policies and goals

Performance Measurement: Financial Sustainability

- Operating reserve in place
- Number of unpaid accounts
- Sustainable revenue source

Performance Measurement: Financial Stability

- Review of financial ratios
- Diversity of funding sources
- Increasing average gift size
- Increasing rate of funds from fundraisers
- Review of monthly financial reports

- Line of credit used as intended

Performance Measurement: Highest Quality Care for Our Animals

- Observation of animal behavior
- Post adoption surveys
- Annual Board of Animal Health Inspection
- Creation of facilities plan and report on progress
- Vaccines, testing, other preventative measures versus industry standard

Performance Measurement: Empowering Work Environment

- Review of staff performance evaluations
- Percentage of staff and volunteers retained throughout the year
- Total number of negative incidents being reported
- Regular staff meetings
- Review of communication log

Performance Measurement: Be a Responsible Resource to the Community

- Contingency plans in place
- Percentage of animals taken-in from local pounds
- Percentage of surrenders from the community
- Total number of animals redirected
- Relationships in place with resource partners in case of emergency

Strategies

The Beltrami Humane Society has devised 10 strategies to help resolve specific strategic issues facing the organization and achieve its goals. "Strategic issues are fundamental policy questions or critical challenges affecting the organization's mandates, mission and values, product or service level and mix, clients, users or payers, costs, financing, organization, or management."¹ In other words, they are challenges facing the organization which affect its ability to achieve its mission. The strategies were developed after considering the organization's stakeholders and the expectations of those stakeholders. The internal and external environments in which the Humane Society operates were also considered. The Humane Society's SWOC Analysis and Stakeholder Analysis can be seen in Appendix C and D respectively.

The Beltrami Humane Society's 10 strategies are as follows:

1. Improve our public image
2. Launch a volunteer program
3. Create a strong Board of Directors
4. Be prepared for emergencies
5. Establish proper procedures
6. Define our purpose
7. Manage the facility and grounds
8. Create professional alliances
9. Demonstrate appreciation to our supporters
10. Increase funding

The Beltrami Humane Society recognizes that many of its strategies are interdependent. Acting on one strategy may influence another strategy, or even several other strategies. For example, if the Humane Society creates professional alliances, it may lead to creating a strong Board of Directors. See Appendix B for a map of the interconnectedness of the strategies.

¹ Bryson, John M. Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations 4th Ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011). P. 55

Additionally, below is an outline of strategies and actions connected to each strategy. When considering each strategy, the actions are the answer to the question, "How do we do that?" Creating specific actions also helps in determining an operating plan for daily work toward the achievement of the goals. Many of these actions could be part of any number of strategies. For the sake of clarity, actions are listed with the strategy with which it most closely corresponds.

Strategy: Improve our Public Image

- Conduct post-adoption survey phone calls
- Send out an annual survey to members and volunteers
- Recruit Board Members from local media outlets
- Form a public awareness committee/committee for community education
 - Develop a public awareness campaign
 - Hold pet care forums at the shelter
 - Visit schools and community centers and give pet care presentations
 - Invite groups such as girl scouts to the shelter for tours

Strategy: Launch a Volunteer Program

- Develop a formal volunteer program
 - Create a volunteer handbook
 - Give recognition to volunteers
 - Volunteer of the month
 - Send thank you cards
 - Hold more in-depth trainings
 - Train volunteers to train dogs
 - Develop MOD Squad Program

Strategy: Create a Strong Board of Directors

- Define Board needs
 - Create a Board recruitment matrix
- Recruit Board Members based on needs
- Include Board Members in operating plan

- Hold consistent monthly Board meetings
- Hold annual review of policies and procedures
- Hold special sessions for Board training

Strategy: Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Develop relationships with local emergency responders
 - Local police and sheriff
 - Minnesota Federated Humane Societies
 - Minnesota Animal Disaster Coalition
- Meet with the city of Bemidji and County to discuss emergency response options
- Create contingency plans for emergencies
 - Secure necessary resources for implementation of plans

Strategy: Establish Proper Procedures

- Review and revise the employee handbook
- Research feasibility of employee benefits packages
- Define roles and responsibilities
 - Review and update position descriptions
 - Provide standardized training for new staff
 - Conduct regular performance reviews (every six months in the first year, then annually)
- Establish clear operating procedures
 - Create operating procedures manual

Strategy: Define our Purpose

- Define local competition
 - Identify and discuss local competition at Board meetings
- Understand the local competition
 - Monthly review of websites and other media

- Periodic review of animal welfare organization media (ASPCA, Best Friends of Animals, Animal Sheltering Magazine, etc.)
- Understand the Humane Society's role
 - Ensure policies and procedures reflect role
- State our impact
 - Create an "elevator speech" statement
 - Learn how to talk about "the funding gap"
 - Get out in the community (public events, presentations at civic clubs, radio spots)

Strategy: Manage the Facility and Grounds

- Form a facility management committee
 - Develop a facility improvement plan
 - Further outfit cat colony rooms
 - Further develop dog walking trails
 - Build and maintain adequate dog houses
- Create and use a regular maintenance plan
- Develop a regular maintenance agreement with a local company
- Finish outdoor dog kennel project

Strategy: Create Professional Alliances

- Strengthen relationship with local vets
 - Pay all vet bills within 30 days or as agreed
 - Meet with local vets to discuss our relationship
 - Visit other clinics to discuss partnering opportunities
- Invite a veterinarian or vet tech to join the Board of Directors

Strategy: Demonstrate Appreciation to our Supporters

- Have Board Members call or send cards to five donors per month
- Send thank you cards after each fundraising event to sponsors
- Seek feedback from members and volunteers through annual survey

- Seek feedback at general membership meeting
- Board of Directors thanks staff members

Strategy: Increase Funding

- Develop funding plan
 - Implement giving programs
 - Seek new sources of funding
 - Research and implement sustainable revenue stream
 - Make thorough plans for annual fundraising and seek adequate volunteer help

Conclusion

The success of the strategies and goals outlined in this report is dependent upon many factors. Some of those factors, such as the overall economic climate are out of the control of the organization. What can be controlled is the commitment of those who believe in the mission of the Beltrami Humane Society. For this plan to have any real significance in the health and success of the organization, the officers, staff, and volunteers must dedicate themselves to carrying out its strategies. They must also be willing to regularly review its contents, measure progress, and determine whether aspects of the plan remain relevant to the organization.

This strategic plan was developed with great hope and anticipation. It is only one piece of the many characteristics of a healthy nonprofit organization. It is an indication of the desire of individuals in the Bemidji community to care for the most vulnerable of us all, companion animals.

Appendix A: Strategy Map

The strategy map is a visual representation of the Beltrami Humane Society's overall strategic plan. The map illustrates how strategic actions, strategies, and goals are all linked to the mission of the organization. Although each category can influence any other, the map generally shows that strategic actions help accomplish strategies which in turn result in accomplishing strategic goals. Ultimately, accomplishing these goals help work toward achieving the mission.

To view the strategy map, see the next page.

Mission

The Beltrami Humane Society is committed to serving the best interest of the animals we strive to protect.

STRATEGIC GOALS



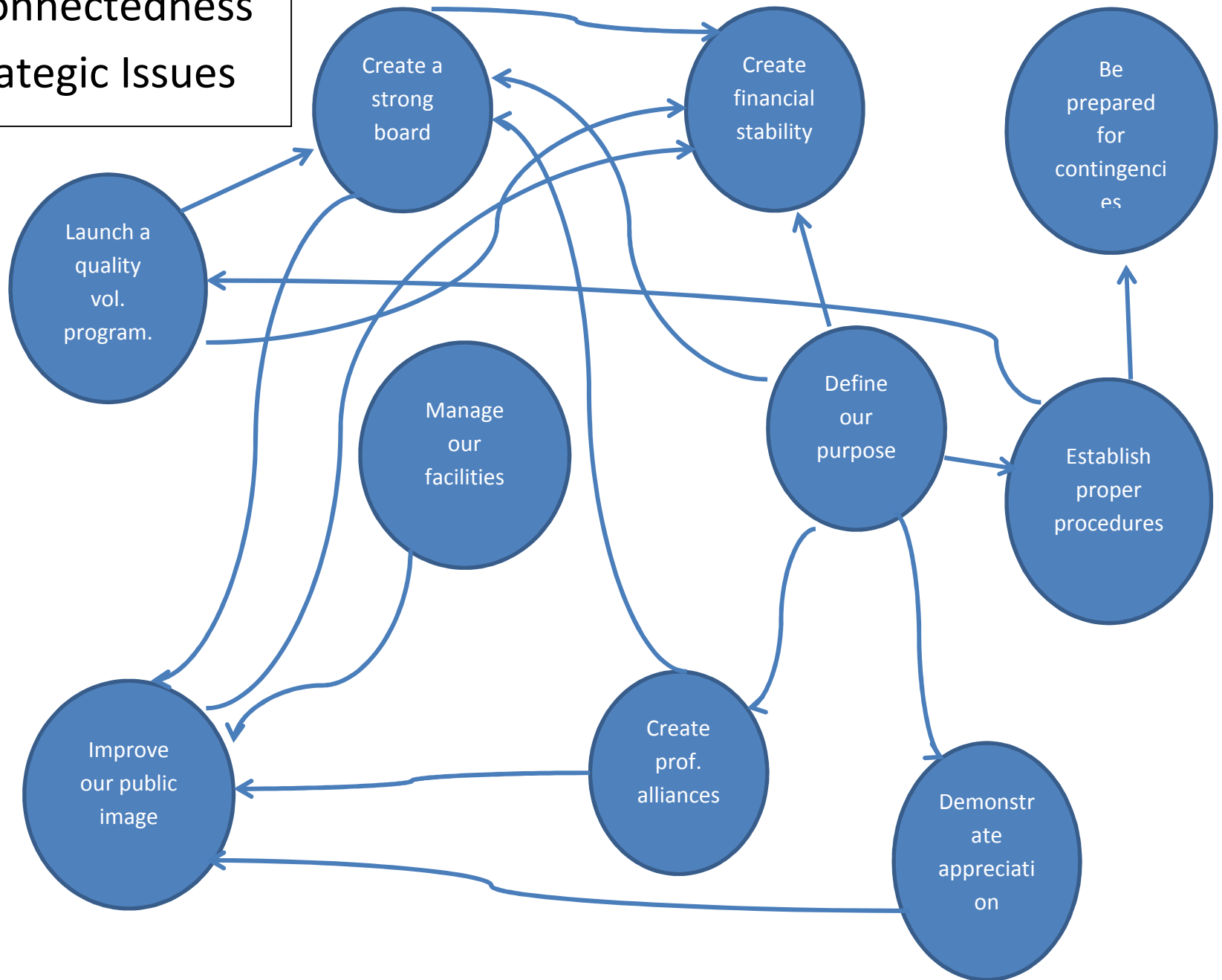
Strategies



Strategic Actions

Appendix B:

**Interconnectedness
of Strategic Issues**



Appendix C: SWOC Analysis

Strengths

By-Laws/Policies

Cleanliness

Better Financial Management

- Improved Financial Situation
- Manageable Expenses

Dedicated Individuals

- Good leadership from Director
- Reasoned and informed Board
- “Fairly” rounded knowledge
- People, staff, Board
- Engaged Board
- Committed Board/Staff
- Strong leadership

Quality Animal Care

Weaknesses

Lack of Financial Resources

- Underqualified staff and volunteers
- Staff inexperienced in animal care
- No complete funding plan

Unclear Roles & Responsibilities

- Staff “over-stepping” position
- Staffing issues
- Procedures not well laid out

Lack of Human Resources

- Small Board
- Small Committees
- No Board members from business, government, financial, legal background

- Not enough people to do all the work (burnout)

Unstructured Volunteer Program

- Unengaged volunteers
- Poor volunteer retention
- Not effective use of volunteers
- No vet/vet tech willing to work with shelter

Opportunities

Board Expansion/Diversification

- Board growth
- Expand Board
- Diversify Board
- New Board member and increase our knowledge

Volunteer Engagement

- Increase/Improve volunteer use
- Increase volunteer base
- Better volunteer retention

Physical Improvements

- Expand facility

Outreach

- Improve community perception
- Build stronger partnerships with city/townships

Increasing Funding

- Increase exposure
- More grant writing
- Better donor awareness
- Increase individual donors

Challenges

Lack of Funding

- Increasing costs we cannot pay

- Sales tax implications
- Lack of funding
- Funding loss to other animal groups
- Change in direction of grants
- Competition for funding
- No money to retain qualified staff

Local Competition

- Lose volunteers to other local organizations

Natural Disasters

- Power outages

Change in Legal Environment

- Rules/Laws we cannot comply with

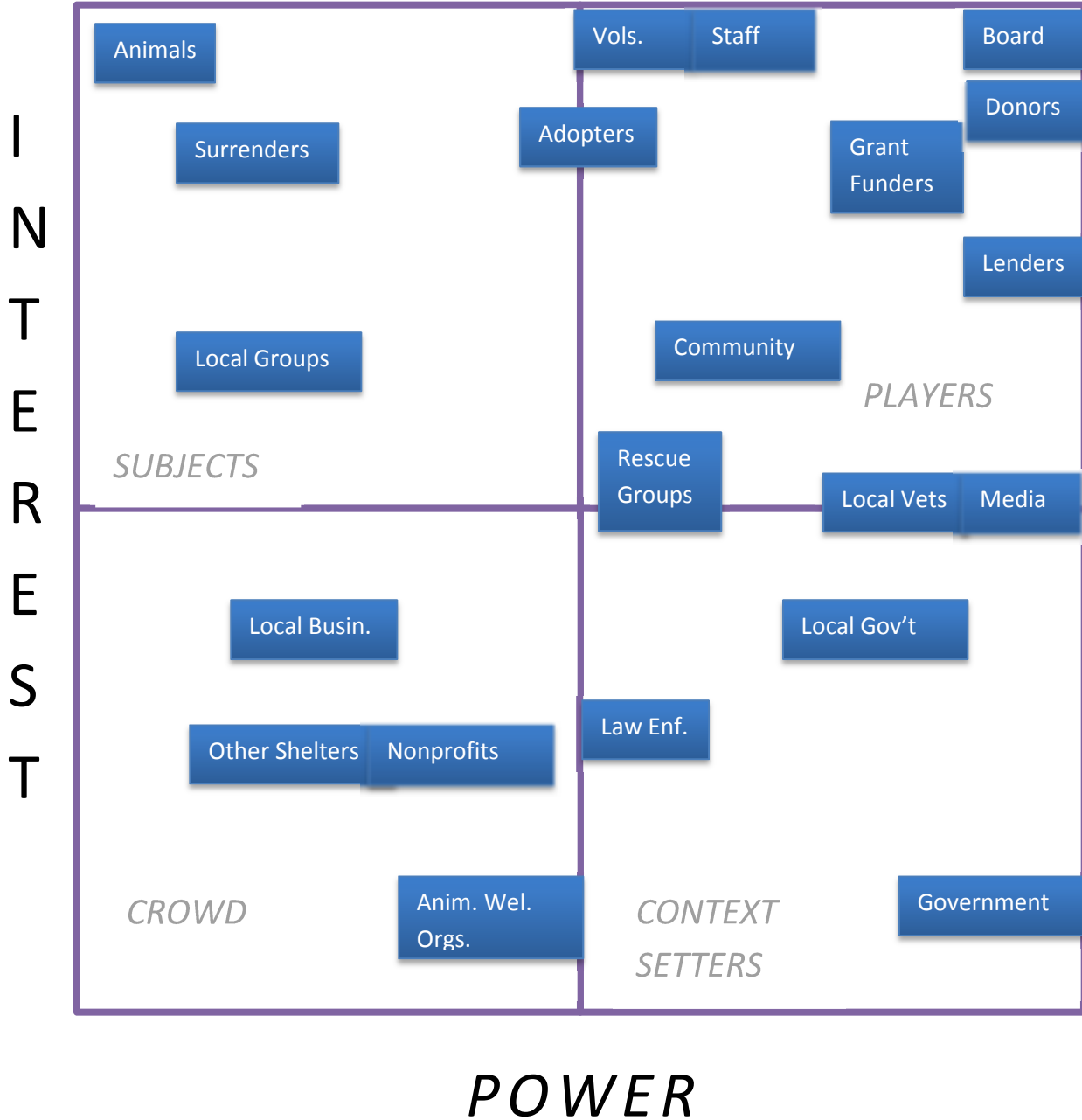
Mending Fences

- We haven't been able to fix relationships with local vets

Loss of Positive Image

- Bad press
- Poor public image
- Public "un" education
- More animals than we have space or money for

Appendix D: Power vs. Interest Grid



Appendix E: Plan Monitoring Schedule

Time Frame	Setting	Actions
Monthly	Regular Board Meetings	Discuss progress, suggest new actions, suggest new performance measures, remove unworkable actions or measures
Annually (February)	Special Board Retreat	Review data and information from performance measurements, assess progress, make amendments/retractions
Summer 2015	Regular Board Meeting	Begin planning for new strategic plan
Fall/Winter 2015/2016	Special Meetings/Retreats	Devise next strategic plan
Spring 2016	Regular Board Meeting	Approve new plan