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Catlett, Calverton sewer costs soar to \$10.9 million



The county will borrow \$7.1 million and use cash reserves to fund the balance of the project, which will provide 308 connections.

Fauquier County government's cost to build a wastewater treatment system for the villages of Catlett and Calverton has jumped dramatically.

The board of supervisors last week appropriated **another \$3.4 million** for the project, which will provide just more than 300 connections for homes, businesses and public buildings in the two villages along Route 28 in eastern Fauquier.

With construction slated to begin this spring, the project will cost an estimated \$10.9 million.

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Five years ago, county officials estimated the cost at just more than \$7 million.

But, that estimate failed to include land acquisition for drainfields, contingency funds for rock and unsuitable soils and system elements such as an emergency generator, County Administrator Paul McCulla told the supervisors last week.

The county recently hired construction management firm Downey & Scott to produce better estimates. The Vint Hill company also will manage the project for Fauquier.

Lynchburg-based **English Construction Co.** will build the system.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has approved a \$7.1 million, low-interest loan to finance construction.

The supervisors agreed to use cash reserves to make up the difference.

Even with the higher cost, Fauquier eventually will recoup its investment through new development and higher real estate assessments, according to county officials. They project a \$9.8-million increase in tax revenue over 20 years.

That projection includes \$34 million worth of new real estate development in Catlett and Calverton.

“What this shows, to me, is that in the end, you’re gonna see the full cost of this project come back to you,” Mr. McCulla told the supervisors during a work session last Thursday afternoon.

The supervisors expressed frustration with the higher costs. But, they voted, 5-0, Thursday night to appropriate the additional funds.

Board members said they made a commitment to citizens and business owners in the area. For decades, poor soils and failing drainfields have plagued the area, thwarting new construction and suppressing sales of existing structures.

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