

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen
Minutes of the 2022 Public Hearing
December 21, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Jen Carter, Chase Kling

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Bob Palifka, Steve Williams

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

The reason for the Public Hearing is to discuss the over expenditure of the 2022 operating budget due to the cost associated with rebuilding the roads following the spring mud season. The Selectboard will be requesting the NH DRA approve the use of the unreserved fund balance for the overage of \$200,936 spent for gravel for the roads.

Palifka felt it was money well spent. The Selectboard received the following letters from Tom Thomson and Ruth Hook and read them into the minutes as requested. Palifka agreed the work was needed, but also felt a Special Town Meeting might have been the better option.

Kling said the roads needed material to make them passable following mud season. The product that was used during mud season made the roads passable for emergency situations, but was not a long-term solution. Many residents expressed the roads were unsafe and the condition of the roads was causing damage to tires and vehicles. Therefore, gravel needed to be added to cover the underlayment on the gravel roads in Town. As no additional comments being addressed,

Motion was made by Adams, seconded by Carter to ask the NH DRA commissioner Lindsey Steep to grant the request to use funds from the unreserved fund balance in the amount of \$200,396 for the over expenditure of the 2022 operating budget due to material needed to rebuild town roads following the 2022 spring mud season. Motion Passed 3/0

The Public Hearing closed at 5:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh

Thomas Thomson
173 Strawberry Hill Road
Orford, NH 03777

DEC 20 2022
TOWN OF ORFORD

Orford Selectboard
2529 Gov. Meldrim Thomson Scenic Highway
Orford, NH 03777

December 20, 2022

Dear Selectboard Members,

I'm asking that this letter be read into the minutes, as I will be unable to attend the Orford Selectboard Public Hearing set for Dec. 21, 2022 at 5:30pm in accordance with the New Hampshire RSA 32:11, Emergency Expenditures and Overexpenditure, which was posted at the Orford Town Office recently.

This years March Mud Season was a difficult one in which the Town spent a total of \$93,831 for materials (heavy rock), trucking and renting a dozer, I believe this years Mud Season would have fallen under N.H. RSA 32:11 Emergency Expenditures and Overexpenditures; but not for the unanticipated expenses to rebuild town roads in the amount you are requesting of \$200,396.

After Mud Season and before spending over \$242,845 for gravel and trucking to "rebuild town roads" you should have called a "Special Town Meeting" to explain what you wanted to do with an estimate of cost and get the approval from the Orford Taxpayers or at the very least sent out a Box Holder with what you wanted to do and set a date for a Public Hearing.

But instead, what appears to have happened was trucks hauled gravel all summer with no one person in charge as the former Road Agent left his position around July 2nd and the Seletboard were and continue to be the Acting Road Agents.

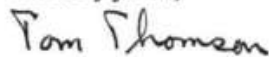
As much as a foot and a half of gravel was put on some roads, which was a total waste of gravel and caused very deep ditches and a narrowing of the road surface.

Sometime in September after 11,285 yards of gravel had been hauled/spread and the total Bills for the gravel and trucking came in at a total of \$242,845 did you think about holding a Public Meeting, which is now set for Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 5:30pm at the Town Office, Selectboard Room, **three days before Christmas!**

The spending on this project was not "Emergency Expenditures and or Overexpenditures" it was simply the lack of leadership and lack of being transparent with the Orford Taxpayers from the very beginning.

Thank you for reading this into the public minutes of this meeting.

Sincerely yours,



Tom Thomson

RECEIVED

DEC 21 2022

TOWN OF ORFORD

Ruth Hook
17 Hammond Lane
Orford, NH 03777

Town of Orford Selectboard
2529 Route 25A
Orford NH 03777

December 21, 2022

To the Members of Orford's Selectboard

I am asking that this letter be read into the minutes.


A Notice for a Public Hearing was posted on the Orford List Serve as well as in newspapers. As the Highway Gravel line of \$30,000 was overspent by \$217,318.97, there should have been a mailing to the public to notify them of this Public Hearing. *According to the NH Municipal website, "What if we need to overspend the bottom line of the budget?" There are two options: obtain permission from the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) or hold a special town meeting to appropriate more money.* You spent \$217,318.97 over the Highway Department's \$30,000 gravel line. In my opinion, you, the Selectboard, should have held a Special Town Meeting as this is a substantial amount of money.

I would like to know how you justify rebuilding roads as "unanticipated expenses". I have read RSA 32:11 II and it states "a Sudden or Unexpected Emergency". So how does "unanticipated expenses" apply to this RSA? **"A sudden or unexpected Emergency"** would apply to Mud Season when the roads were impassable for Residents and Emergency Responders. As a taxpayer, we should have been given the choice to raise additional funds.

Another question, why would you hold a public hearing 3 days before the Christmas Weekend when people are traveling? This is not a small sum of money we are talking about.

Thank you for reading this into the public minutes for this meeting.

Sincerely Your



Ruth Hook