

**TIMOTHY M. HERBST**  
**SECOND STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS**  
**TASHUA KNOLLS GOLF COURSE**  
**MARCH 24, 2011**

Good morning:

I would like to thank the Trumbull Chamber of Commerce, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and the Aquarion Water Company for hosting this event this morning.

It is an honor to give my second State of the Town address here at Tashua Knolls Golf Course. Forty years ago, First Selectman Larry Heimann had the vision of building a Town owned golf course that he believed would enhance the Town's quality of life and Trumbull's desirability as a community of choice. So many positive things happened

during Larry's 12 year stewardship of this community. Trumbull is better because of his leadership and vision.

Forty years later, a new generation of Trumbullites are called upon to move Trumbull forward.

Our country and our state are facing unprecedented economic challenges. Whether through natural disaster or civil unrest, we have seen crises that will have worldwide implications in Japan, Egypt and Libya.

In the face of such trepidation, it is easy to lose faith. However, we, the people of Trumbull and the leaders of Trumbull have a moral obligation to lead our Town to a better tomorrow. To do so during these difficult times requires us to stabilize the tax rate, maintain town services,

improve our quality of life and make Trumbull a desirable community of choice.

My second proposed budget strives to keep these core priorities in place. This budget:

- Makes necessary investments in infrastructure, especially in the area of road paving;
- Increases the Town's annual contribution to our pension fund;
- Increases funding for public education and our police;
- Maintains senior tax relief, and;
- Reorganizes various Town departments to realize cost containment, efficiencies and long term savings.

We have been able to make these investments while holding the overall increase to 1.92%.

**This increase is lower than last year and represents the first time in more than 15 years where the Town has realized two consecutive budget increases of less than 2%.**

Our success in producing two very austere budgets is the result of sound cost containment. This year, the Town of Trumbull realized a surplus of 1.6 million dollars.

I fully recognize that cost containment starts from the top.

That's why the first selectman's office budget is now 22% lower than when I took office.

We have made consolidations within departments to realize further cost containment.

We've contained labor costs by negotiating 3 collective bargaining agreements that have a zero percent increase in the first year of each new contract.

We have successfully negotiated furlough days into labor contracts and increased employee contributions for healthcare.

Perhaps most significantly, we have successfully negotiated the first defined contribution plan in a collective bargaining agreement in the Town's history.

These efforts have yielded substantial dividends for Trumbull taxpayers and this is reflected in last year's adopted budget and this year's proposed budget.

Despite our efforts towards austerity, I must point out that we have made substantial investments in public education.

Between last year's approved budget and my proposed budget this year, Trumbull will have invested an additional 2.8 million in public education. This does not include an additional 2 million of other revenue that has been spent for the benefit of our school system during this same time period.

An additional 4.8 million dollars has been spent on public education in the Town of Trumbull over the course of the last two years.

Last year, when 2000 teachers were laid off state wide, Trumbull had no layoffs. In fact, we added staff.

---

Trumbull has maintained class size. CAPT test scores have improved and Connecticut Mastery Test scores remain strong.

Good people can philosophically disagree on the question of whether consistently spending more money means a better education. I am of the school of thought that spending more money is not an automatic panacea. This is demonstrated by the fact that Trumbull children are performing better than children in other Fairfield County school districts that spend more per pupil.

Last year, 100 computers were replaced in our schools and white boards were installed in all 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms.

The current Board of Education has developed a plan to implement full day kindergarten in the Trumbull School System for the 2012-2013

school year and this board of education should be commended for developing a plan of action on an early childhood initiative that is long overdue in the Town of Trumbull.

Our Town officials and high school building committee have reduced the costs of the high school renovation to ensure that this project is completed on time and under budget.

To the parents of Trumbull I say this: Despite a tough economic environment, we have an excellent school system and don't let anyone else tell you otherwise.

There are areas where we can reduce the Board of Education budget without compromising the quality of education. As the Town Council considers my proposed budget, this morning I am calling on council members in both parties to combine health insurance

accounts between both the Board of Education and Town into one line item on the Town side of the ledger.

This will put less of a strain on the Board of Education each year when they develop their budget and provide a greater incentive to the Town in negotiating favorable health insurance rates that reduce the burden on our taxpayers. It's time to reduce the inefficiency and duplication and start working towards the same goal. The Board of Education is in the business of educating children, not negotiating with health insurance companies.

The Board of Finance thinks this is a good idea.

The School Superintendent and some members of the Board of Education think this is a good idea.

---

My administration thinks this is a good idea.

Let's come together and get it done.

---

While we have made additional investments in education, we have also made necessary investments in public safety. These investments have yielded positive results for the people of Trumbull. In 2010 burglaries throughout Trumbull were down 56%. Car break-ins were down 56% and stolen vehicles were down 28%. We've added a new K-9 unit to our police force to help fight crime. I offer my thanks to the hard working men and women of the Trumbull Police Department and offer my thanks to the sound leadership of our Police Chief, Tom Kiely.

While our second consecutive budget of less than 2% is the result of cost containment, it is also the result of increased revenue.

Trumbull's economic development strategy is working and all residents should be proud of our success. This is because of sound decisions and collaboration between our Planning & Zoning Commission and Economic Development Commission.

Despite a severely challenged economy, this year our Grand List grew by 93 million dollars, an increase of nearly 2%. 70% of this growth was in our commercial tax base. A main driver for this growth started with the historic 45 million dollar renovation of the Trumbull Mall, completed last fall. But our Grand List growth did not stop there. This growth was a direct result of developments like the new research and development center for Sun Products, Cooper Surgical's new divisional headquarters building, and a brand new Home Depot which opened earlier this month.

This year, 26 new businesses have signed leases and are coming to Trumbull.

Trumbull Center has begun a major four-phase revitalization project which will be ongoing this year. This economic redevelopment will be critical to the Town's overall economic development strategy.

The Planning & Zoning Commission has expanded the professional office overlay zone across from the Trumbull Mall and also across from Town Hall. The commission also recently approved the first mixed use project in the Town's history, in the vicinity of the Long Hill Green.

Two major medical developments were approved for construction and Scan Tools started and completed its 11,000 square foot expansion.

In addition, Trumbull was awarded over \$1.5 Million in state and federal funding for roadway improvements in the Trumbull Corporate Park and Trumbull Center.

**Trumbull's economy is strong and Trumbull is open for business.**

While we have so much to be proud of, Trumbull is not without its share of challenges and complexities. My fellow citizens, we have necessary and difficult decisions to make on several levels. How we respond to these challenges will determine our success and strength as a community over the course of the next 50 years.

The Town of Trumbull is a microcosm of the entire United States. The U.S. is faced with the dilemma of failing bridges, roads and facilities that are in need of repair and replacement and

the Town of Trumbull is no exception. This past winter took a toll on our roads and facilities. To address these problems, this administration will begin the process of seeking approvals from various Town bodies to implement the first year of a five year capital plan to address the needs of our facilities and roadways.

I would like to speak to the taxpayers of this Town candidly and directly about the Town's pension fund. Right now, the Town's pension obligation is only funded at 27%. The problems with this fund are monumental and did not happen overnight. For the last twenty years, the Town of Trumbull has not made sound investment decisions, but instead has kicked the can.

During the 1990's when economic times were strong and our Grand List growth was robust,

we were not making the necessary investments in the fund. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we increased our investment, but increased the number of employees that would be pension eligible. All we have done is throw money at a problem without a constructive and consistent solution. Let me be very clear. If we do not take bold and immediate action to address this problem, it will compromise the Town's financial health within the next ten years.

I did not run for First Selectman to kick the can, or pass the problems onto my successor to solve. I ran for First Selectman to make a difference and today, upon the recommendations of our Pension Board and others, I am recommending a Pension Deficit

Mitigation Plan for our Town. The solutions are both short term and long term:

---

1. Last year, my budget recommended the annual pension contribution be increased from \$200,000 a year to \$300,000 a year. In this budget, I am recommending an annual pension contribution increase of \$400,000 a year, over and above what is already budgeted for at least the next five years, perhaps even longer;

---

2. Long term, as all Town labor contracts are up for renegotiation, the Town must insist that all new employees that are hired by the Town go from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. Over time, as we make additional investments in the fund while reducing our overall pension

liability, the strength of the fund will improve;

---

3. Our problems will not be solved by focusing on new hires or exclusively on the backs of Trumbull taxpayers. To mitigate our unfunded liability will require additional contribution from our employees who are already pension eligible. As we renegotiate existing contracts, we will have to insist that the amount of contribution from those Town employees that are pension eligible increase over the life of their continued employment with the Town;

---

4. Since the Town is responsible for the pension of all Board of Education non-

certified personnel, the Town of Trumbull must have a seat and a say at the bargaining table as we renegotiate each of these contracts. If the Town is paying the pension benefit, the Town should be able to negotiate all employee contributions. The standards I articulated for defined contribution and increased employee contribution cannot be borne exclusively by Town personnel. They must also be shared by non-certified Board of Education staff.

---

Make no mistake about it - - this course of action is critical to the Town's financial health and well-being.

While the decisions we make with our pension fund will be of enormous consequence over the next several years, so too will the decisions we make with respect to our Water Pollution

Control Authority. Over the last year, there have been several issues confronting our WPCA, both here in Trumbull and in the region.

Trumbull is now confronted with a difficult question: Do we enter a regional sewer authority with Bridgeport, enter a regional authority with another abutting community, build our own treatment plant or renegotiate our current contract?

Irrespective of the path we choose, the day of reckoning is here.

A regional solution cannot be contemplated until we get our own house in order. I know many residents are concerned about what they have learned in recent weeks about Trumbull's WPCA and previous sewer projects. While many residents have expressed concern, at the same time they should have confidence in

knowing that today, business as usual is over and this administration is committed to fundamental and ethical reform.

Over the course of the last year we have addressed several problems associated with the Town's WPCA, first by appointed new and qualified Town personnel and WPCA members who have responded proactively to the recommendations of a forensic audit and independent engineering report.

The Town has filed suit to recover damages as they relate to a botched sewer project completed in the Jog Hill section of Town and we have put in place the necessary oversight for a sewer project that is ongoing in North Nichols. These reforms will ensure that we don't make the same mistakes again.

The recent inquiries into the protocols of the WPCA have revealed that purchasing practices have been in contravention to the Town Charter and accepted industry standards. Other companies who have bid work in our Town have questioned the integrity of the process. Independent forensic auditors have raised significant and legitimate questions about this process. The time has come to take action to correct the problem. Next month, my administration will send a comprehensive purchasing policy to the Town Council for their consideration. We must act decisively with this policy and make it part of the Town's municipal code.

As we get our own house in order, the Town is committed to analyzing our available options for wastewater treatment. I want to thank

WPCA member Tim Hampford for leading the bipartisan committee that is studying Trumbull's sewage treatment options.

What I can tell you is that there is no easy solution, nor is there a low cost solution for the Town of Trumbull. This committee will work hard over the course of the next several months to access all of the Town's options. And as those options materialize, I believe the community as a whole must become part of the decision making process. As this committee makes a recommendation to the Town of Trumbull as to our best course of action, today, I am insisting that this course of action be ratified by the people of Trumbull in a public referendum. This is a decision that will affect the Town of Trumbull and its taxpayers for the next 50 years and every eligible voter and

taxpayer should have the opportunity to let their voice be heard.

The Town of Trumbull is at the forefront of so many regional issues. We are a community that serves as a linchpin that connects Fairfield County to the rest of Connecticut. And with respect to education in a regional context, currently there is concentrated dialogue concerning a proposed inter-district magnet school slated for the Fairchild Wheeler park property in the southern portion of Trumbull.

My administration recognizes how important this school is for the City of Bridgeport. I recognize that the Connecticut Supreme Court has ruled that education is a fundamental right. Every child, irrespective of race, gender or socio-economic status deserves the best

education possible and the opportunity to succeed.

However, our leaders in state government must understand that regionalization in any form comes with an associated cost. That cost should not be borne exclusively by one or two communities. Right now, the leaders of Trumbull and Bridgeport are negotiating the elements of an inter-municipal agreement.

More than a year ago, this administration proposed to the City of Bridgeport a solution that would have represented no additional cost to the City of Bridgeport, the Town of Trumbull or the State of Connecticut.

Last year, the Town of Trumbull proposed a property swap with the City of Bridgeport. Across the street from the proposed magnet school site is state owned property that

currently houses facilities for the Bridgeport Parks and Recreation Department. We proposed that Trumbull and Bridgeport work collaboratively with the State of Connecticut, specifically the Connecticut General Assembly, to change the municipal boundary lines, thus transferring jurisdiction of the respective properties. Under our proposal, Trumbull would have right to the property that currently houses the Bridgeport Parks and Recreation Department and in turn, Bridgeport would have the proposed magnet school site within its territorial jurisdiction. This is a win-win for Trumbull and Bridgeport.

If this project is important to the state and important to the Governor, then I am urging Governor Malloy and the legislature to help us make this a reality so the magnet school can

move forward and the concerns of every community affected by this proposal are addressed.

Trumbull is a community rich in tradition. And over time, new traditions are developed by those that hold the office of First Selectman as a way to honor the Town's history, while inspiring confidence for the future. I started my State of the Town address this morning by speaking of the visionary leadership of First Selectman Larry Heimann.

I will conclude my speech today by speaking of him again, as I present the first annual Clarence F. Heimann Leadership Award. This award, to be given by the First Selectman each year at the conclusion of his or her State of the Town address, honors a Town employee or group of Town employees who demonstrate leadership,

sacrifice and compassion for Trumbull citizens through their good work and deeds.

I see this leadership in men like, Tom Baldwin, Glen Broadbend, Greg Marconi, Richard Infante and Joseph Mitri, who successfully lead our Highway Department workers through one of the worst winters of our lifetime and kept our streets clear and safe.

I see this leadership and sacrifice in women like our Finance Director, Maria Pires, who took the helm as the Town's finance director during the worst economic calamity since the Great Depression, successfully navigating the Town's finances through two very tough budgets that have stabilized the tax rate and improved the Town's fiscal health.

I see this leadership and sacrifice in people like Lt. Ronald Kirby and Bill Chiaranzelli, who

successfully led our emergency management team this winter.

And I see this leadership, sacrifice and compassion in people like Officer Michael Gonzalez, who donated a portion of his liver to save the life of a fellow officer's daughter.

Please join me in saluting these outstanding public servants.

Today, we move forward with pride in our past, faith in our future and confidence in our cause. May God bless you and May God continue to bless the Town of Trumbull. Thank you.

