

**First Selectman Tesoro's
STATE OF THE TOWN 2018**

Thank you for that very kind introduction.

I want to thank the Trumbull Chamber of Commerce, in particular Jeff Bishop, and the Bridgeport Regional Business Council for hosting this event this morning, and thank you to the event's corporate sponsors, Aquarion Water Company, Crown Castle, BL Companies, and Sikorsky Credit Union. And a special thank you to all of you for coming out this morning. We all know that the Greater Bridgeport area in general, and Trumbull in particular, will prosper and succeed if we work together. Your presence here today and the good work all of you do affirms that statement. It is my honor to address you today.

Twenty seven years ago, my husband and I made a decision to choose the Town of Trumbull as the place to raise our new family. That decision was not made lightly and has proven to be one of the best decisions we ever made together.

I love Trumbull, and as First Selectman I will do all that I can to make this great community even better. As we all know, Trumbull is a beautiful New England community with tree-lined streets, historic homes, the Pequonnock River Trail, beautiful parks and great schools. It is an attractive community for home buyers and for business owners looking to invest or reinvest in the town.

Even though our town is nearly built-out, opportunities remain for development, and there is a need for a more diverse housing stock to attract new residents and to provide a viable alternative for residents looking to downsize their current homes. However, Trumbull residents first and foremost continue to be passionate about preserving the character of this town and their quality of life. This has served us all well and **I share that passion.**

Trumbull is a wonderful Town in which to live and work. We have a lot to be proud of but there is always more work we can do.

BUDGET

Let's start with the budget. It is my opinion that both businesses and families are attracted to a community with sensible priorities, restrained spending and stable taxes. My budget reflects my priorities, a safe community, good schools and robust services. We achieved this with a modest increase in spending and the lowest tax increase in years.

Our Town must remain affordable and competitive and I am committed to keeping it so. Please note that in my budget we have accounted for the Governor's ill-advised proposal to reduce aid to our Town. It is my hope that our State legislators will work together to see these cuts are restored. If so, and assuming there are no political games played with revenue projections, our tax increase will be even lower.

That is good for business. Remember too that we were able to keep taxes and spending in check while still investing in our future. I will speak more about that in a few moments.

WINTER RECOGNITION

Before going to topics of pensions, economic development and education, I want to recognize and thank our police, our public works employees, our Parks Department employees, and all our first responders for their outstanding work this winter. I have been in office about 16 weeks and we have faced four Nor'easters and a Bombogenesis or two. I don't know what a Bombogenesis is but it sure produced a massive amount of snow. I am sure all of us are going to be thrilled to see the flowers and sunshine of spring and summer.

However, when we are enjoying those wonderful seasons, please remember the work of all those that cleared our streets, removed fallen trees and helped to restore our power. Our workers are real heroes and deserve all of our thanks.

I would like to thank Director of Public Works John Marsilio and Dmitri Paris, Director of Parks and Recreation and their teams for their outstanding work.

PENSIONS

On the subject of pensions, there has been improvement but there is more work to do. Our Police Pension is funded at 75% and our Town

Pension at 42%. We can neither rest nor declare victory until both plans are funded at 100%.

In my budget I have fully funded the annual required contribution, otherwise known as the ARC, by contributing \$8,305,000 for the upcoming fiscal year. In addition, if the opportunity presents itself, I will recommend we use a portion of our surplus, up to 25%, to make additional contributions over the ARC. This step will signal our strong commitment as a Community to close this funding gap.

Funding our pensions, maintaining a strong general fund, continued focus on economic growth and tax stabilization are all factors that will contribute to maintaining, and perhaps improving, our strong bond rating.

We have a healthy unreserved fund balance and a lower debt service due to a refunding and the retirement of other bonds. As a result, our interest rates should continue to remain low, which means less tax dollars are needed to pay the interest on Town debt. **That is good news for all our taxpayers, residents and businesses alike.**

I want to thank Finance Director Maria Pires and her department, and our Treasurer Anthony Musto for their efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Growing our Grand List through smart and well-planned development is essential. We have a lot to be proud of in the area of economic development.

I was proud to cut the ribbon for the Henkel Corporation, which invested 20 million dollars to expand their presence on Trefoil Drive. During that visit to Henkel, the executives praised the quality of our workforce in this region and expressed their interest in expanding their Trumbull presence further in the future. I am proud of their confidence in our community and I urge all Trumbull citizens to get to know the Henkel Corporation and the fine products they make. When making buying decisions we should remember those companies that have shown confidence in us.

I have visited another of our great corporate citizens, Unilever, and listened to their concerns and expressed to them that we in Trumbull regard their presence as extremely important.

I met with the Trumbull Westfield Mall team. We will work closely with them during their ownership transition and during this challenging retail climate. We must work together to get a positive result. I am happy to say that Stewart's All American and Ulta Beauty have chosen our Mall as a place to open their businesses.

I visited the Park Avenue Medical Center. They are doing well and continue to expand.

We have some new progress coming in Trumbull Center:

The former vacant medical office building at 965 White Plains Road will undergo redevelopment starting this spring. A new 21,000 sq.ft. retail center will be constructed, which will house CVS, Starbucks and potentially one or two other retail users. The CVS and Starbucks are each slated for a drive-thru. Foundation permits are in place as of last week. Utilities are being pulled to make way for the demolition of the existing structure in the coming weeks.

We have seen a significant investment made by William Raveis in Trumbull. They recently did a complete renovation and modernization of their workspace. They are located directly next door to the new Sikorsky Credit Union location.

And... we are all looking forward to Bianco Rosso and Fatty Patty's, opening this spring.

Small businesses continue to choose Trumbull as a place to do business. Liv's Gifts and Radzwillas Kitchen and Bath Design are open on Main Street and Code Ninjas has chosen Madison Village in Trumbull for their first Connecticut Franchise. Dr. Samuel Book, a skin care surgeon with a practice in New York is opening another practice on Technology Drive.

Once again, I urge all Trumbull citizens to patronize our wonderful shops, restaurants and businesses.

The future is bright as well.

Dolce Vita Spa will be moving to Monroe Turnpike in Trumbull from Shelton and Monroe Turnpike will see a new 10,000 square foot medical office building that is now under construction.

A new 135,000 foot storage facility will break ground on Quarry Road this spring. Educational Playcare is constructing a new 16,800 square foot preschool and daycare facility that is due to open in September in our Trumbull Corporate Park.

The former site of Marissa's is going through the approval process and after speaking to the developers, I am excited about this new development. Finally, on April 5 in the Town Council Chambers, there will be a meeting on the concepts and plans for the Long Hill Green area.

This is just some of the activity. We appreciate all of our businesses, large and small, and the developers who are seeking to invest in our wonderful Town.

I am very pro-business and pro-development consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development and with an eye toward preserving the character of our Community.

We will be undertaking two important planning efforts this year in order to reinvigorate Trumbull Corporate Park and our Industrial Zone area off Reservoir Avenue and Lindeman Drive. These efforts will be open, transparent and with timely communication and input from neighbors in those areas. I am committed to both doing these things and doing them the right way.

I want your input and ideas. My door is always open to you because I know that when we work together and communicate openly your experience in Trumbull will be a positive and successful one.

I want to thank Economic & Community Development Director Rina Bakalar for her hard work, but we both know we can't stop now. Our Grand List slightly declined this year and that is a signal for us to redouble our efforts to retain the businesses we have, attract new business, and give our landlords and developers the tools they need to grow and be successful. My administration, the Town Council and our Planning & Zoning Commission must work together for this to happen.

EDUCATION

It is increasingly clear that the employees of today want to live in close proximity to where they work. I believe there is no better place to do that than Trumbull. One critical element of an attractive community is a strong education system. As a longtime advocate for excellence in education at a fair price, I am pleased to see that so many of the things I fought for, such as small class sizes, a rich curriculum, and diverse activities, exist in our school system.

SAFETY

However, it all begins with a safe modern environment in which to learn. On March 8 I called a forum where we addressed safety in our schools. I am pleased to say that Trumbull schools are safe and well protected. The investments we have made over many years in school security make it so. For example, when I ran as a candidate two years ago I called for the addition of School Resource Officers. I am pleased the previous administration heard this call and adopted my platform as their own. This highlights a very important concept, that school safety is not a partisan issue. As with so many things of great importance, politics must be put aside for the greater good.

SCHOOL SUPPORT

That is why more will be done. Under the guidance of safety professionals like our police and fire officials, the Board of Education

and my Administration will work together to make our very safe schools stronger still. In the upcoming months you will see initiatives in this regard.

Good schools require ongoing investment and we are doing just that. My budget provides for the largest investment since the 2012 - 2013 budget. In fact, my budget more than doubles the amount given to the Board of Education last year. We were able to do that and still have the lowest tax increase in years. **As I said, we don't have to spend more, we have to spend smarter, and we did.**

RENOVATION

That being said, there is more work to be done. I will make it a priority to work with the Board of Education to come up with a sensible, fiscally responsible, ten-year plan to renovate our elementary and middle schools as well as the administration building at Long Hill.

I do not support selling the Long Hill Administration Building and burdening the taxpayers with an expensive new building without first undertaking a serious study with respect to our existing facility and the impact any sale would have on surrounding neighborhoods. Renovating the existing space at Long Hill should be a part of the larger study, with priority being given to our school buildings.

RECOGNITION

I want to congratulate our school administrators, our teachers and our many parent volunteers and organizations who, by working together,

have made our school system strong and competitive at a very fair price.

Let me not forget our students. Our award-winning academic teams, our fantastic sports teams, our wonderful band and choir are but a few of the many examples of the excellence of our students and their advisors. Now, a word about the arts. Last Friday my husband and I attended the Trumbull High School performance of *Curtains*, the latest in a series of outstanding productions under the Leadership of Jessica Spillane and Shannon Bolan.

I am a longtime advocate of the Arts because I believe the Arts, like our academic teams and our sports teams, teach our young people the skills that you, as business leaders require. Dedication, hard work, and working together as a team are the skills they learn and that is good for our students today and in the future.

The Arts deserve our support in equal measure. The same is true for our other activities as well and my administration will be a strong advocate for that.

We need to be sure that every student has the opportunity to reach their potential. **Every student, without exception.** Our curriculum, our activities, and our focus must be on achieving that goal.

One last note, whether you agree with the recent March for School Safety or not, you have to take pride in the way our Trumbull students, both those who chose to participate and those who did not, conducted themselves. They represented our community with respect and dignity and I thank them for that. I am proud of them. We all should be proud of them, and recognize that they are our future.

I would like to recognize Superintendent Dr. Gary Cialfi, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Michael McGrath and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessments Dr. Jonathan Budd, our principals, administrators, teachers and support staff for their dedication to our students and our community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A great town like Trumbull will only remain a fantastic place to live and conduct business if it remains a safe community. We have been blessed with great Chiefs of Police and our current Chief, Michael Lombardo, is no exception, Mike and his outstanding officers are second to none.

The same is true of our Fire Officials, our EMS team and all other safety professionals. I sleep well knowing these outstanding public servants are on the job. **I am committed to their having the manpower, equipment and training they need to do their jobs.**

The dark cloud on every community is the opioid epidemic. Trumbull has been a leader in addressing underage drinking and drugs and we must be a leader in fighting this opioid scourge as well.

Last evening we launched our Community Wellness Task Force, the purpose of which is to promote individual, family, and community health and wellness through community collaboration, identification of local resources and coordination of learning opportunities.

A multifaceted approach, bringing together law enforcement, public health and education is an absolute necessity.

I would like to thank Chief Michael Lombardo, Deputy Chief Glen Byrnes, Deputy Chief Tom Savarese, and Deputy Chief Ron Kirby, Fire Marshal Megan Murphy, Barbara Crandall our Acting head of EMS, and their dedicated teams for making our community safe.

CIVIC DUTY

I also want to thank all of our elected and appointed officials who serve in a variety of roles. Virtually all are town volunteers who have chosen to offer their skills and abilities for the benefit of our community. The same is true for those that stood for public office but did not win. They too deserve our recognition for their willingness to bring their ideas and energy to our community.

PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTER

One of the most talked about subjects in town over the past two years has been the proposal for a new Senior/Community Center. When I ran for First Selectman, I stated the people should make the decision as to whether to build this project in a public referendum.

Let me give you an update on where this proposal currently stands:

At the last Town Council meeting, the Building Committee submitted its final report. I would like to thank all of those who served on the Building Committee. This group of community volunteers met often,

and each devoted many hours of their time. We owe them our gratitude for their service to our town.

Since the election there have been several recent developments, and unfortunately, the news was not good. The state grant of over \$2 million for the trailhead was not received, and it has now been frozen. It is uncertain and perhaps even doubtful that this grant will ever be awarded. \$2 million is a lot of money to ask our taxpayers to absorb in addition to the project costs.

Additionally, the state informed us that they would not approve a traffic light at the intersection of Quality Street and Church Hill Road. You will recall that the Planning and Zoning Commission's positive recommendation on this project was based on a traffic light at this location. The safety of our citizens is our paramount concern. It is not clear that the traffic flows in this area would provide the safety we are looking for if there is no traffic light at this intersection. We must thoroughly investigate this development before we proceed.

Lastly, the Building Committee did not provide estimates on the future operating costs of the proposed facility. The Building Committee felt this was beyond their scope. That being said, before this project can proceed, we must have a financially sound estimate of annual operating costs.

We will continue to study the feasibility of this project, and consider all options. **The goal must be to put forth the best plan for**

Trumbull...now, and for decades to come. I will continue to keep the community apprised of future plans, and our Town Council will determine the path forward.

COMMUNITY

A safe town with good schools requires more to become a true community. We need public events that bring us all together. I am pleased that Trumbull Day will be moved back to its traditional time of year in late June as the unofficial kickoff of the summer season. I am equally pleased to partner with the Barnum Festival to enhance the Trumbull Day experience.

Free Concerts on the Green will continue. The Eggstravaganza egg hunt this Saturday will revive another Trumbull tradition. In the future we will look to bring back other traditions as well as develop new ones.

Well planned and executed community events are good for our Citizens and good for our businesses.

We need to finish the storm cleanup on Rails to Trails and redo the liner installation at Beach Pool. I am confident we can accomplish these things in a timely manner. I have put together a group of town volunteers to look at creative ways of building a new Veteran's Center.

Good ideas need funds, and as I mentioned earlier, our town needs restrained spending and tax stability to be competitive. We all understand that large tax increases simply won't do.

So, we need to grow our Grand List with smart development.

The continuing search for greater efficiency is another way to fund our worthy objectives. So, we will do an energy audit of all our town buildings to determine ways of delivering energy at a lower cost. As an example, UI will replace our existing street light bulbs with highly efficient LED lighting at no cost to our taxpayers. This project is expected to save our taxpayers over \$100,000 in lighting costs each year.

Another real opportunity lies in working with our surrounding communities to find opportunities to share services to save money. I believe in this and I will pursue it. **Selective regionalization will not be easy but I am certain it is worth the effort.**

There is much more to talk about but I have spoken quite at length already. Our town is in a good place but as I said at the beginning, we should both recognize all we have achieved and acknowledge that there is more work to be done.

There is one more thing I would like to do before closing. My predecessor initiated the Clarence Heimann Award to recognize individuals in our community who, by their actions, have rendered exemplary service to our community. I think this is a great idea but, rather than honor only one of our great first selectman out of the many

outstanding First Selectman who served our community, I choose to honor them all. I hope you will indulge me as I rename the award: The First Selectman's Award for Community Service.

There are many worthy recipients in our community, but the two recipients this year are well known for their tireless efforts on behalf of our town. Time and time again these two people have stepped forward to offer their services to the citizens of Trumbull.

Our First recipient is a person whose generosity is legendary. He is a member of the Trumbull Police Commission. He is known throughout the area as a generous supporter and a host of many fundraisers for people in need. If I mentioned all he has done we would be here for days. If I mentioned all the people he has assisted we would be here for years. He has received many well deserved honors and this year he was chosen as the ringmaster of the Barnum Festival. On behalf of all the great past First Selectmen of the Town of Trumbull it is my pleasure and honor to give the First Selectman's Award for Community Service to John Vazzano.

Our next recipient is known as a volunteer extraordinaire for worthy causes. She has been a selfless volunteer in Trumbull for many years. While her children were in the Trumbull public schools, she was a PTSA leader. In addition, she has taken it upon herself to be a champion of the Trumbull Food Pantry. She posts the Food Pantry's needs on Facebook, works with the Food Pantry staff to determine the pantry's needs on an ongoing basis, picks up and delivers donated goods, and organizes food drives. She is also an active member of the Trumbull Senior Citizen Commission.

On behalf of the great past First Selectman of the Town of Trumbull it is my honor and privilege to give the First Selectman's Award for Community Service to Mary Isaac.

I will close my remarks with one more thought. I have talked about our wonderful police and fire personnel. I have recognized our school administrators and teachers. I have thanked our public works leadership and employees. I have thanked our elected officials and members of our boards and commissions. I have recognized our first responders. I also want to thank all our other employees at Town Hall for their tireless efforts, our Human Resources Director James Haselkamp, our Health District Director Rhonda Capuano, our Library Director, Stefan Lyhne-Nielsen and our Director of Human Services Michele Jacob.

I will make one and only one promise here today. I and my administration will act, at all times, with civility, transparency, respect and with an attitude of compromise and finding common ground. Government is not about one individual or one party. **It is about doing the right thing the right way.**

Congratulations to John and Mary and a hearty thanks to all of you in the audience and all those who will see this on tape. Together we make Trumbull a wonderful community. Together we will insure a bright future for Trumbull. Thank you for listening and have a great day.