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## TOWN OF TRUMBULL CONNECTICUT

**May 30, 2014**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **STATEMENT FROM FIRST SELECTMAN TIMOTHY M. HERBST ON THE COMPLETED FORENSIC AUDIT OF THE LIKE NEW RENOVATION OF TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL:**

A year and a half ago, after numerous problems and deficiencies were identified by the Town, Board of Education, school administrators, teachers, parents and students concerning the ongoing like new renovation of Trumbull High School, my administration requested that the Trumbull Town Council commission a forensic audit of this construction project. I firmly believe that when we are dealing with millions of dollars of taxpayer money, all Trumbullites have a right and expectation to guarantee that their tax dollars are being utilized in a responsible, efficient and ethical manner.

Trumbull taxpayers also deserve a guarantee that when they make a significant investment in a capital project, the end product is one that we can take pride in where there is confidence that we got the best possible product for the best possible price. I also believe that audits such as this one are a useful tool to make sure we do not repeat mistakes on future projects and guarantee going forward that a uniform template is followed on capital projects of this magnitude.

Previously, the forensic audit of the Contract 3/Jog Hill project not only identified deficiencies, but also provided a road map to guarantee that problems like the ones we experienced on that project never happen again. The audit that is attached, completed by Sansiveri Kimball and Co., L.L.P. and Pan American Consulting Services, LLC, not only identified problems

but developed a plan of action to make sure these problems never happen again in the future as the Town undertakes other capital projects involving school construction and renovation.

The findings contained in this audit confirm that the pre-construction protocols and organization for this project were clearly deficient. This audit demonstrates how consistent procurement standards were in some instances, ignored. The two capital projects referenced hereinabove commenced in 2007-2008, in the absence of a comprehensive purchasing policy being adopted by the Town of Trumbull in 2011. It goes without saying that had this purchasing policy been in full force and effect in 2007 and 2008 when much of the preliminary design on this project took place, many of these problems could have been avoided.

Particularly troubling to me is the case of one bidder being given an unfair advantage in appearing before the Trumbull High School Building Committee (THSBC) to discuss his company's bid, while it appears the same opportunity was not afforded to any other bidders seeking to perform the same service. The report goes on to show that the bidder was selected despite the fact that the company's bid was significantly different from the other bids received. In point of fact, the bidder that was chosen had a "not to exceed" price that was not only substantially exceeded, but was approved by the THSBC without consultation with the Finance Director, Town Attorneys or other relevant Town personnel.

What is particularly useful in this audit is that the Town of Trumbull now has a template of how large, school capital construction projects should be planned, organized and executed in the future. This audit must serve as a roadmap of how we must approach capital construction projects in our schools and public facilities in the years ahead.