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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

December 9, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: KEN COLE

SUBJECT: YOUR REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
ON USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR
WELFARE STAFF--GRAND RAPIDS
PRESS ITEM (Tab A)

Kent County is one of five local governments in the Grand Rapids area which have joined together in a legally created consortium for the purpose of planning and administering manpower programs authorized by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973. The Grand Rapids Area Manpower Planning Council (GRAMPC) as the consortium is designated, is made up of the City of Grand Rapids, which is the administrative arm of the consortium and the counties of Kent, Ionia, Allegan, and Montcalm.

The GRAMPC is the recipient of two CETA grants: One in the amount of \$2,867,393, the purpose of which is to provide comprehensive manpower services under Title I of the Act; the other, in the amount of \$4,700,368, which is for the creation of approximately 1,250 public service jobs under Title II of CETA. The November 26 article in the Grand Rapids Press is an announcement of one resource decision by Kent County regarding its Title II program. In assessing its public service needs, the County placed improvement of social service delivery high on its list of priorities. Accordingly, part of its Title II allocation will be used to fund ten positions in the Department of Social Services. The entire FY '74-FY '75 share for Kent County is approximately \$1,000,000. (The \$1,551,000 figure cited in the article includes the County's own estimate for FY '76 funding.) Positions are being created in such diverse county agencies as the Kent Community Hospital, the Park Commission, the Treasurer's Office and the Sheriff's Office.

Individuals eligible to participate in the program are the unemployed and underemployed. From this broad group, veterans, public assistance recipients and former manpower trainees are being given special consideration in the Grand Rapids Area Manpower Planning Council.

A

Federal Funds Permit Adding 10 Employees to County Welfare Staff

By Maury DeJonge

Employment of 10 persons for the Kent County Department of Social Services under the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) was approved Monday by the Legislative, Judicial and Taxation Committee.

The matter previously had been postponed, as was a request for additional personnel at Kent Community Hospital. Evert Vermeer, director of county welfare, said the additional personnel would add to the efficiency of his department.

Approved were three general assistance investigators; two accounts receivable specialists and five account clerks.

The request also is expected to be presented to the Finance Committee for approval before concurrence by the county Board of Commissioners.

Vermeer said the investigators would make home visits on all general assistance recipients and would be responsible for making home visits within six months of the time a recipient is put on assistance. Comparable salary range for state employees in this category begins at \$8,686 per year, plus county fringe benefits.

The two accounts receivable specialists would be responsible for setting up a routine manner of collecting from persons owing the county welfare department and would make home visits. Their salaries would be \$8,686 plus fringe benefits.

Vermeer said it is anticipated full-time

collectors could return to the county a minimum of four times their annual salary.

The five clerks would be used in accounting functions, filing and maintenance of records. The positions would pay \$5,994 plus fringe benefits.

The county will receive \$1,551,000 over the next 18 months in CETA funds which are earmarked for hiring unemployed persons.

Deputy Controller Richard Platte said CETA monies, coupled with existing Emergency Employment Act funds, make it possible for a total hiring of 143 unemployed persons. That figure is based on an average per-worker income of \$12,300 over the next 18 months.

Commissioner Charles Wiersma, committee chairman, expressed concern over the fact that there is little "discipline" over those persons receiving food stamps.

"It's another example of federal legislation that breeds inflation," Wiersma said.

Vermeer said he agreed there are some abuses in the program, but nevertheless declared, "It's the best way to feed people."

Commissioner Stephen L. Kishkorn said he has come to the conclusion that attempting to keep a hand on the food stamp program is nearly impossible.

He pointed out that it has been forecast that in the next few years 50 million persons in the United

States will be eligible for food stamps. "Who is going to pay the bill?" he asked.

The committee was given a favorable picture of "Project Growth," a program started by Wiersma and Kishkorn with the cooperation of the Agricultural Extension Office and Commissioner Friley T. Johnson.

Purpose of the project was to give young persons in the inner city experience in raising vegetables in vacant lots.

Richard Reath, head of the extension office, told the committee the project "was all plus, and next year will be even more successful."

Wiersma, who arranged to have the lots plowed, said with the limited amount of time available for the project (because of the late spring), "I would consider the first year a success and would like to see it continued."

He said bills received by the county to date total \$317. "For that kind of money we accomplished a heck of a lot," Wiersma said.

Vermeer said he would be happy to have welfare recipients participate in the project next year, and Kishkorn said Kent County was about "nine months ahead of the President's (Gerald R. Ford) request that Americans plant their own gardens to help fight world famine."

On another matter, the committee heard Commissioner Robert Schellenberg criticize the trend toward regional planning.

"We should eliminate regionalism and get back to planning at the local level," Schellenberg said. "Regionalism is a mistake. The budget for the Region 8 organization is something else."

Commissioner Thomas Lamoreaux joined in the criticism, saying the tendency of Region 8 planning in general is that "they always come up with plans, but we never see them implemented."

Officer Shoots Guard Dog

A German Shepherd guard dog whose owner claims "He's just like a big puppy" when the owner or persons he knows are around was shot in the left shoulder Sunday night by a police officer checking a warehouse via what he believed to be an unsecured door.

The dog, Smokey, underwent surgery Monday at Northwest Animal Hospital, 751 Lamoreaux Dr. NW, and the veterinarian, Dennis White, D.V.M., said the animal came through the surgery in good shape.

The bullet tore off a section of bone, but Dr. White said the dog should be able to return to guard duty in six to eight weeks.

Patrolman James Friend reported he discovered an unlocked door on the Pleas-

ant St. side of W-B Produce Haulers, Inc., 325 Pleasant St. SW, about 11:50 p.m. Sunday. After calling for a back-up police unit, he entered the building.

Friend said he was checking the northwest quadrant of the building when he noticed a large dog moving toward him. He shone his flashlight on the animal as it continued to approach. When the dog was eight to nine feet away, it charged, he said. Friend fired his pistol three times at the dog, he reported, then followed the wounded animal to the office section of the warehouse.

There, Friend found William M. Berenbrock, president of W-B and owner of the dog, calling police to report shots in the building. With him were two employees.

Berenbrock said Monday the door through which the officer entered had been left unlocked because that was the way he and the employees had come into the building.

According to Berenbrock and Mrs. Roberta Sarge, office manager for W-B,

Line of Credit Gets Eaten Up by Suspect

A man is in jail for attempting to use a stolen credit card, but the courts will have to take store officials' word for it because he ate the evidence.

Do Reporters Exaggerate City's Strife

By Jack Bloom