

# Higher parking fees could buy garage

By Heidi Bell  
Journal Staff Writer

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For downtown employees, the days of running outside every two hours to move their cars to new parking places in the two-hour zone could soon be over.

In their place would be a two-level parking structure, between 120 and 170 new parking spaces, and higher fines for overparking.

Wednesday, members of the Rapid City Legal and Finance Committee received a study that looks at the feasibility of building a two-level parking structure at the city-owned parking lot between Fifth and Sixth streets, along the railroad tracks.

The Englewood, Colo., consultants who conducted the study found a shortage of employee parking spaces, which forces employees to either

park illegally on the street or park in residential areas near downtown.

According to their calculations, the city could build a \$2 million parking structure and help pay for it through higher fees and fines.

Walker Parking Consultants/Engineers Inc. has recommended that the city increase its parking fines from \$2 (\$7 after 72 hours) to \$5 (\$10 after 72 hours), and increase its leased parking rates in most lots to \$30 per month by July 1, 1997.

Community Development Director Bonnie Hughes said the consultants found Rapid City was below average on parking rates and fines when compared with other cities of fewer than 100,000 people.

The Legal and Finance Committee will consider the matter Nov. 13.

Also at Wednesday's meeting, aldermen took the following actions,

which will be formally voted on during the Rapid City Council meeting Monday, Nov. 4:

■ Approved union contracts for 1997-1999 (see related story) and approved a resolution that will give the same percentage increases to nonunion employees.

■ Agreed to allocate \$10,000 from 1996 council contingency funds to the Rapid City Public Library to pay for consulting services.

The \$10,000 is in addition to a \$150,000 library appropriation planned for 1997, which will be formally approved as soon as the library board submits a plan for how to spend the money.

■ Approved plans to have the mayor appoint a task force to request proposals for the city Emergency Services Contract. Task force members will review proposals and make a recommendation to the council.

## City, workers reach pact

By Heidi Bell  
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Rapid City employees may receive a pay increase of about 10 percent over the next three years, but don't expect them all to run out and buy new cars.

Under a contract approved Wednesday by the Rapid City Council's Legal and Finance Committee, a big chunk of most employees' wage increases probably won't reach their paychecks because of changes in the city's health insurance plan.

The contract, which now goes to

the full council for approval, applies to approximately 395 city employees who belong to unions. That includes members of the public works, library, fire and police departments.

Both sides are pleased with the way negotiations went.

"This year, it went very well," Rapid City Personnel Director Jack Teems said. Negotiators tried a new procedure called interest-based bargaining, which tries to identify common goals instead of taking an adversarial approach.

"I tell you, this was the most

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