

Council authorizes spending \$140,000 for city parking lot

By BOB FELL
Journal Staff Writer

The Rapid City Council authorized spending \$140,000 to buy land for a downtown parking lot Monday night but turned down a proposal to authorize two replacements on the police force.

The council authorized Mayor Art LaCroix to sign a sales contract with Commonwealth South Dakota Theaters for the three lots on St. Joe east of Sixth presently used as a Park and Shop lot. Terms, to which City Atty. Ray Woodsend said Commonwealth has agreed, call for a \$5,000 down payment and the balance of \$70,000 to be paid when the deal is closed or by May 1.

Woodsend also reported that a tentative agreement has been reached for the purchase of the two lots next to the Commonwealth property. The lots, which include the old Standard Oil service station, are owned by American Oil and the city has offered \$65,000 for the land and building.

On Woodsend's recommendation, the council authorized the mayor to enter into an agreement with American Oil to purchase the corner property.

It was a different approach to the appointing of police officers. The legal and finance committee suggested that a vote be taken first on whether or not the mayor should be authorized to name two replacement officers. The motion lost 3 to 6 after only limited debate, thus eliminating the need to re-

veal the names of the candidates for replacement officers.

Had the first motion passed, the mayor would have presented the names of two candidates who have qualified and are recommended by Chief Rae Neal.

Normally, the mayor and chief just

program through this year, but because the state funds were cut off, the contract with ASAP and the city has been cancelled effective April 3.

ASAP funds provided for two vehicles and four police officers whose primary work was operating a program designed to reduce drunk driving on city streets.

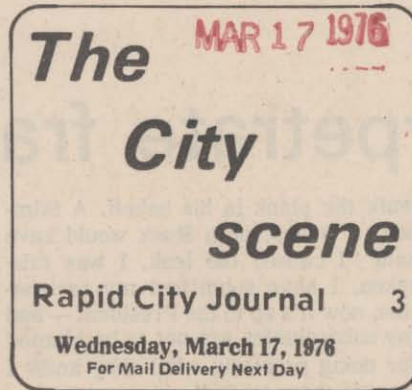
Because the four officers were considered "supernumeraries," over and above the authorized strength of the department, Mike Madden and other aldermen reasoned that without the state funds it would amount to increasing the size of the department to authorize replacing the two at the expense of the local taxpayers.

Jim Kissel, however, said that he had second thoughts after considering the increased number of tourists who are expected to invade the city this summer because of the Bicentennial. The police force should remain at full strength, he said, not cut.

After the vote, in which Kissel was joined by Robert Flittie and Darline Gerlach, Kissel remarked that "I'd sure hate to be in the chief's shoes this summer."

"That was completely uncalled for," snapped Page Townley. "There are six of us against it and you lost."

Chief Neal later said he is continuing to explore other sources of funds and federal grants that are available for the continued efficient operation of the department.



present the names of officer candidates for council approval, or rejection, as the case may be.

But the resignation of two patrolmen and the need to replace them came about the time the ASAP (Alcohol Safety Action Program) was killed in the State Legislature when it refused to appropriate matching funds. The funds would have financed the program in the state for the next fiscal year beginning July 1.

The \$64,400 grant awarded the city last year would have carried the pro-