

RAPID CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM

April 13, 2012

MEMO TO: City Council Members

FROM: Lt. James Johns

SUBJECT: Examination of Associated Parking Fees

Recently, a change to the rules regarding the immobilization of vehicles in violation of the parking ordinances was suggested and reviewed. The change to ordinance would provide that any person owing more than \$100 in outstanding (late) fines would be subject to immobilization (boot). This would be in addition to the person having five or more outstanding tickets. With this change we would be in a position to recover a large amount of unpaid parking fines that currently exist. In looking at handicapped parking violations alone, there is currently over \$19,000 in unpaid tickets. Additionally, there are offenders in the system that will have three unpaid handicapped tickets, \$330 total, who do not meet the current threshold of five outstanding tickets. By creating the new threshold of \$100 in outstanding fees, we will have the opportunity to address some of these scofflaws and recover funds owed to the City. .

In addition we are asking for a change in the boot fee. Currently the boot fee is \$50, but it is in the City's interest to raise this to \$100. This will help cover the employee costs of placing and removing boots, and will provide a greater incentive to regular violators to change their behavior which is the ultimate goal.

Here are examples of what other municipalities are doing:

SIOUX FALLS- They do not utilize boots. If a vehicle has 5 or more outstanding tickets, a tow company is called and the vehicle is impounded. Violator must pay the outstanding fees, and the tow bill before the car will be released. Other tickets are turned over to a collections agency, with approximately 20% success rate in recovery.

SIOUX CITY- After two late notices on the third and fourth violation, a boot is applied. Boot fee, \$100.

FT. COLLINS- Two outstanding tickets, over \$75. 20 day grace period, on the outstanding ticket. Boot fee, \$50

GILLETTE- They do not boot cars. They issue a bench warrant and tow the vehicle after a second letter notice.

BOULDER- They do not boot. If \$85 is owed, the vehicle gets towed. Violator has to pay the fine plus costs associated with the tow.

In Rapid City, a tow of a vehicle is likely to cost anywhere from \$75-\$125 depending on how long the car has been impounded, and how difficult it was to tow the vehicle. We do end up

towing vehicles, but only after they have been booted, and no one has made any effort to correct the situation.

In reviewing what other municipalities are doing, I believe these long needed changes are fair, and in line with what others are doing.

The Parking Enforcement Staff will work closely with the City Attorney's office as we have done for numerous years, to closely monitor and double check the dates and outstanding fines owed before the boot is applied. Whenever a vehicle on the boot list is located, the employee confirms with the City Attorney's office that the vehicle is correct to be on the list and needs to be booted. This practice will continue without fail

In summary, these ordinance changes will do two things:

1. The threshold of getting on the boot list will be modified to include having an outstanding balance of \$100 or more in unpaid tickets.
2. Will provide for a \$100 boot fee for those who have outstanding tickets they have failed to address.

Lt. James Johns
Support Services