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Those differences in opinions were actually huge, and led to heated public arguments. Several city councilors ended up quitting, as did much of the city staff. "It was a brutal time," Mills recalled.

Running on volunteers, the city was treading water. The Lane County rule change went unnoticed by Dunes City. Lane County didn't notice either, so for the past decade the city has continued to collect the shared

revenue.

"We don't know why it wasn't noticed," Mills said. "Nobody said anything and nobody did anything. Not even our auditors saw it, and they do our books. We've just been flying under the radar screen because we've been receiving those funds, but we do not assess the tax. So that's a violation."

A violation that could take away up to \$100,000 from the city annually.

"We would be deep in trouble," if the money went away,

City Council President Robert Orr said.

It wasn't until this year that staff realized the discrepancy and spoke to the city's lawyers about ways to rectify the problem.

The answer? Impose a property tax.

"We don't really want to assess a tax," Mills said. "We needed a very, very minimal tax just so we can say, 'Yes we assess a property tax, so give us the money our people pay you already.'"

Dunes City's suggested solution is to create a \$.005 tax on

property value.

"Half a penny," Mills explained.

And how much will residents end up paying annually? For a home that is worth \$200,000, the homeowner will end up paying the city \$1 annually.

"You're not paying \$4,000 a year from property tax," Dunes City Mayor Robert Forsythe said.

The city believes that the total revenue collected from all of the city's residents would be around \$1,216.

But, as was pointed out by city councilors, there is always a danger of "creeping taxes." It may start off at half a penny, but future city councils could push to increase the amount.

The solution staff came up with was to make this "tax" an option levy that expires in five years. The rate can't be raised within those five years, and after the levy runs out, the city and the voters reevaluate.

Dunes City Budget Committee member Rory Hammond, who helped with the idea, expressed why he felt the plan was good for Dunes City.

"I fear over regulation," he said. "I fear a great governmental bureaucracy that grows. I fear overzealous code enforcements. I fear high taxes. This state has a culture that 'government knows best,' but frankly it doesn't. I believe in local control, and I believe that this tax will

create more good to help Dunes City residents than hurt them. We have to do this tax because overzealous regulations. It's too bad that we have to do this. But it's the only way to get around it. I don't want to see this be the start of a huge property tax, but I think it's the right thing to do."

In another ballot measure approved by the city council, the city's current struggles with collecting code enforcement funds was addressed.

Currently, the city has no agreement with a municipal court judge to hear cases regarding code enforcement infractions, such as violation to septic codes to nuisance orders.

Generally, the city attempts to avoid forcing citizens to pay fines.

"If people will sit down with me and talk about how they can get results to everybody's satisfaction, we don't fine them," Mills said. "We try and build in a lot of flexibility to everybody's satisfaction."

But sometimes people aren't so amenable. Some residents say they will fix an issue but don't bother responding to an inquiry in the first place.

"Or they just lie and say they've done it, which has happened," Mills said.

The reason people can get away with this is because Dunes City has no real enforcement.

"In order to do anything, I have to travel to Eugene and have them enter it in," Mills explained. "I can enter fines now, but I can't collect them. I don't have the authority to place a lien without court approval."

So the city is looking to enter an agreement with the circuit court judge who hears trials in Florence three times a week.

City code does state that any court proceedings would have to take place at Dunes City hall.

"The way our charter is written right now, in order to have a municipal judge, they have to meet right here," Mills explained. "If that were to happen, you would have to have several meeting rooms. You have to have a separate place to put all files and a bailiff as well."

The measure would allow Dunes City to have its trials heard in Florence.

However, councilors questioned if paying for a judge through the collections of fines would be worth the effort and expense.

"My thought on the topic is, a small percentage of [fines] is better than 100 percent of nothing," Forsythe said. "And what happens is, it puts teeth into our ordinances."

Dunes City residents will have the opportunity to vote on the measures this November.



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Grzeskowiak continued, "Many of their parents are working during the day, so continuing meal services during the summer is a natural fit to meet the demand."

The impact of hunger on a student's life can be uncomfortable and distracting in the short term, but also significantly detrimental

over the long term. A growing child's ability to understand and integrate new concepts has been directly linked to proper nutritional support. In short, it's hard to think when you are hungry and it's hard to do well in school if you can't think.

No Kid Hungry has found that 4 million youth rely on free meals during the summer when school meals are not available. This is one reason for Siuslaw School District's summer meal program, which has been designed to serve all youth in the area, from one year old to 18, free of charge.

Grzeskowiak said that any young person that needs something to eat can receive a free meal, or two a day, even when school is not in session.

"Unlike the school sessions, there is no qualifying criteria. All you have to do is be a kid in the community under the age of 18," Grzeskowiak said. "It doesn't matter to the district whether they are visiting relatives for the summer, home schoolers, preschoolers or get rolled up in a stroller."

"So, I guess there are really two criteria; be a kid and need a meal." The meal locations and the distribution times for this year are slightly different than in year's past.

Breakfast and lunch service will be Monday through Friday beginning June 19 and continuing through Aug. 17, with a day off for the Fourth of July. Breakfast is served between 8 and 8:30 a.m. at Siuslaw elementary and high schools on Oak Street. Lunch is served at the elementary school from 11:30 to 11:55 a.m., then delivered to Miller Park between noon and 12:15 p.m. The delivery van then goes to the Siuslaw Public Library, 1460 Ninth St., from 12:20 to 12:35 p.m. The lunch distribution ends up at Siuslaw High School from 12:40 to 12:55 p.m.

There are a number of other programs underway in Florence that are also concerned with the issue of childhood hunger. Grzeskowiak is glad for the broader attention being paid to the problem.

"Summer seems to one of the forgotten times for donations to many service organizations. If anyone in the community is interested in donating or helping one of our partner organizations, I would encourage them to contact Food Backpack for Kids, the Boys & Girls Club of Western Lane County or Florence Food Share," he said. "They can always use a few more donations or helping hands, no matter the time of the year. The need is always present."

For more information, contact the Siuslaw School District Office at 541-997-2651 or visit siuslaw.k12.or.us.

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