

# DISABLED VETS GET TAX REBATES

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**HILLSBOROUGH** - Permanently disabled war veterans in the township will receive a reimbursement on the municipal portion of their property tax bill following a resolution passed Tuesday by the township committee. The veterans were initially granted exemption from paying property taxes under a 'true date' provision approved in September by township officials. Mayor Anthony Ferrera said under state law, 100 per cent disabled war veterans are exempted from paying property taxes, and the township is compensated for the reduction in revenue.

• However, the issue in Hillsborough has been the date the exemption goes into effect.

Hillsborough veterans had approached township officials, stating sometimes it takes up to a year for the federal Veterans Administration to complete the paperwork for the disability designation.

The state only grants the disabled veteran the tax exemption when the veteran is able to apply for it with the completed paperwork from the Veterans Administration and not the 'true date' when the veteran became disabled, which may have been years previously.

Ferrera has called the measure "a petty and shameful way to treat these veterans" and "just plain wrong." Hillsborough Clerk and Business

Administrator Kevin Davis said there are about 12 township property owners who are 100 percent disabled as a result of wartime service, and they will be contacted by the township. The reimbursement will cost the township about \$9,000, which he said will be funded through this year's municipal budget.

"It's just the right thing to do," Ferrera told the public during Tuesday's meeting.

Committeeman Bob Wagner echoed the sentiment, stating, "Looking at this, it certainly makes sense. I think we're doing the right thing."

Committeeman Paul Drake said he hopes other municipalities follow suit and offer the same for veterans in their towns.

Michael Detsis, an Army Vietnam veteran who lives on East Mountain Road, showed emotion Tuesday as he thanked township officials for granting the resolution.

"You're indeed taking a leadership position in resolving this," Detsis said. "I'm very grateful for your efforts...it's truly life changing to veterans. I thank you and I salute you for it."

Municipal taxes - the only portion of the property tax bill under the control of the Township Committee - make up about 13 percent of the total tax bill. School taxes account for 66 percent of the bill and county taxes make up 18 percent.