Public Discussion Outline:
Veterans Property Tax Exemptions

The Core Objective: Realignment After 20 Years

The town is evaluating how to modernize veterans' property tax exemptions to reflect current economic realities without creating a noticeable impact on the rest of our community's taxpayers.

Key Issues Under Consideration

1. Chronic Stagnation vs. Rising Property Values

- **Outdated Limits:** Our local veteran exemption ceilings have remained completely unchanged since 2007–2008.
- **Eroded Protection:** In 2007, the disabled veteran exemption cap covered 49% of the median home value. Today, because regional home values have spiked by 98%, that same cap covers just 25% of a median home's value.
- **The Ceiling Penalty:** Because current limits are capped so low, local veterans whose official VA disability ratings have increased receive $0 in additional tax relief. They are completely locked out of their earned benefits by outdated caps.

2. Addressing the New State "Disparity Gap"

- **New State Exemption:** New York State recently enacted an exemption for veterans determined by the VA to be 100% permanently and totally disabled. This option grants a 100% property tax exemption with no cap.
- **The Widening Gap:** If our town adopts this new state option without adjusting our local caps, it creates a massive disparity. For example, a 100% disabled veteran would receive a full tax exemption, while a 90% disabled combat veteran would remain frozen under our outdated caps.

3. Implementing a 5-Year Mandatory Review

- To prevent our local brackets from suffering another multi-decade stagnation, the proposal mandates that the town establish a periodic evaluation at least once every five years to keep pace with changing market conditions.

Proposed Exemption Cap Adjustments

Because our municipality qualifies as a high-appreciation zone, the state authorizes us to adopt higher local ceilings:

Exemption Category	Current Ceiling	Proposed Local Ceiling
Wartime Veteran	$36,000	$60,000
Combat Veteran (Additional)	$24,000	$40,000
Disabled Veteran	$120,000	$200,000
Cold War Veteran	$12,000	$45,000
Cold War Disabled Veteran	$40,000	$150,000

Next Steps

This framework represents a very limited, unnoticeable shift that ensures our local exemptions remain equitable and closely aligned with real economic conditions. This summary will be used to guide an upcoming public hearing and adopting a local law that updates the current law.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How will updating these veteran exemptions affect my property tax bill?

A: Because our town has so few veterans, updating these outdated caps results in a very limited, unnoticeable shift across the town's tax footprint. In reality, the overall impact on the average taxpayer's property bill amounts to just pennies. It is an unnoticeable shift for the community at large, but it provides profound, meaningful relief to our individual service members.

Q: Why are we increasing limits for people who might have high incomes?

A: By law, property tax exemptions for veterans are based strictly on military service, combat deployment, and service-connected disability ratings. Veterans with disability ratings are not limited by earnings, and personal income is entirely ignored by the state framework for these specific programs. This update simply realigns the exemption caps with today's home values.

Q: What is the new state-authorized 100% exemption?

A: New York State recently enacted a specialized local option (applicable to assessment rolls beginning on or after October 1, 2026) that grants a 100% property tax exemption with no cap for veterans designated by the VA as permanently and totally disabled. The town is considering adopting this option alongside updating our local caps to keep the system fair for all partially disabled veterans.

Q: Why do Cold War veterans have different numbers than Wartime veterans?

A: New York State law categorizes veterans based on their eras of service, defining separate baseline structures for Alternative Veterans (Wartime/Combat) and Cold War Veterans. However, both programs have suffered from the same 20-year stagnation and are being adjusted proportionally under this proposal.

Q: Has the Town Board officially voted to pass these changes yet?

A: No. No official vote has taken place. This framework was developed following a recent public discussion and will be used to prepare for an upcoming public hearing and adopting a local law that updates the current law. Community feedback is encouraged throughout this process.