

# Bedford residents to see 1% hike in summer property taxes

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Bedford Township residents will see an increase in their summer property taxes after the board of trustees approved a 1 percent administration fee.

The board okayed the fee increase during its board meeting Tuesday night by a 7-0 vote.

Walt Wilburn, township supervisor, said the fee is needed because of declining revenues.

"We took a hit with a 5 percent decrease in state sales tax revenues we receive," Mr. Wilburn said. "We made a lot of cuts before we got to this point."

The administration fee is expected to generate about \$294,000 to make up for the

estimated \$222,000 in revenue decreases, Mr. Wilburn said.

Earlier this year, the township laid off three employees, eliminated its mosquito control program and reduced workers' hours in an effort to rectify its budget.

Trustee Paul Francis said he took the lead on the introduction of this property tax because of the need to balance the township's budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, which begins July 1.

"We thought we had a balanced budget until May 5 when Gov. (Jennifer) Granholm cut the state shared revenue," Mr. Francis said. "We had no choice."

If a property owner's summer taxes are \$1,500, the 1 percent increase would add an additional \$15 to the bill,

said Mr. Francis, who is a member of the budget committee.

There are 15 townships in Monroe County, and, until Tuesday night's vote, Bedford Township was the only one not charging the administration fee.

Many townships throughout the state charge administration fees, as well.

"This is our only option to balance the budget," Mr. Francis said.

"We were recommended by the state to do this five years ago," Mr. Wilburn said. "We put it off until we really needed it."

Residents who have a special assessment on their property taxes will not be subjected to the 1 percent administration fee.