

## Case Study: Direct Messages with Dana Miller, City of Seminole, OK: Briefing Document

Feb 2023

**Briefing Document:** Review of "Case Study: Direct Messages with Dana Miller, City of Seminole, OK"

**Date:** October 26, 2023

**Purpose:** This briefing document summarizes the main themes, key findings, and most important ideas or facts from the provided case study, "Direct Messages with Dana Miller, City of Seminole, OK."

**Context:** The case study examines communication exchanges related to youth sports governance in Seminole, OK, focusing on issues of transparency, legal compliance, and financial management. It serves as part of a doctoral dissertation on "Integrity of the Game vs Economic Impact (Politics)."

### **Main Themes**

*The case study highlights several critical themes permeating the youth sports landscape and municipal governance in Seminole, OK:*

**Transparency & Accountability Deficiencies:** A pervasive lack of clarity in public proposals, financial disclosures, and lease agreements is identified as a systemic issue. The document frequently points to "recurring gaps in published proposals, financial disclosures, and lease terms" as evidence of these issues.

**Legal & Ethical Compliance Concerns:** The communications log and subsequent analysis reveal potential violations of Oklahoma's Open Meetings Act, particularly regarding undisclosed facility relocations and questionable cost estimates. The study explicitly states, "Exchanges reveal potential Open Meetings Act concerns and ethical implications of undisclosed facility relocations and cost estimates."

**Data-Driven Advocacy and its Influence:** The role of empirical data, operational reports, and financial benchmarks, primarily provided by Kenneth Crawford, is shown to significantly influence municipal discussions and decisions. The study notes that it "Demonstrates the influence of empirical operational data, cost benchmarks, and financial reports in shaping municipal decisions."

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**Challenges and Opportunities in Stakeholder Communication:** The case study illustrates how informal communication channels, while sometimes clarifying issues, can also complicate official processes. It underscores the importance of engaging subject-matter experts and addressing stakeholder conflicts.

**Financial Mismanagement and Misappropriation of Funds:** Specific instances of unexplained costs, discrepancies in insurance payouts, and potentially improper use of FEMA funds for purposes outside their approved scope are central to the issues discussed.

### **Most Important Ideas or Facts**

**Undisclosed Lease and Relocation Terms for Youth Sports Facilities:** A key revelation is the lack of public documentation and discussion regarding a "\$12K lease proposal" and a plan to "move the season to SCC fields." This information was not initially mentioned in official proposals, leading to community confusion and potential legal issues. Kenneth Crawford explicitly inquired, "Was that \$12K lease proposal for a calendar year or just for Spring League 2023?", to which Dana Miller "Noted absence of any mention of the \$12K lease payment to SSC in proposals."

**Discrepancies in Field Repair Estimates and Insurance Payouts:** There's a significant disparity between the estimated cost of repairing the Blake Auld field and the actual insurance payout. Dana Miller shared an anecdote about "Steve's \$790K estimate for Blake Auld field repair versus \$50K insurance payout, expressing math confusion." Kenneth Crawford further provided data comparing builder costs and challenging "inflated BS figure used to pressure council."

**Potential Open Meetings Act Violations:** The Seminole City Council's practices, such as tabling agenda items without prior public notice of substantive discussion points (e.g., the \$12K lease, facility relocation, Conditional Use Permit), are highlighted as potential contraventions of the Open Meetings Act. The legal analysis explicitly states, "The council's tabling of agenda items without prior public notice of substantive discussion points... may contravene the requirement that agendas be sufficiently detailed to inform the public of matters to be considered."

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**Misappropriation of FEMA Funds:** There is concern that \$50,500 of the May 2022 tornado insurance proceeds were appropriated for shipping containers, which may be "outside the explicit FEMA-approved scope, which focused on structural repairs and site safety." The analysis warns that "County and city officials should obtain FEMA concurrence for reprogramming these funds or risk disallowed costs requiring reimbursement from the city general fund."

**Importance of Data-Driven Advocacy:** Kenneth Crawford consistently provided empirical data, operational reports (e.g., "2016–2017 Gameday Management reports"), and financial analyses that "pre-empted potential community confusion by exposing undocumented lease and relocation terms." This underscores the influence of well-researched information in challenging potentially unethical practices.

**Need for Enhanced Public Notification for Land-Use Changes:** The inquiry about a Conditional Use Permit for shipping containers at 2803 Hwy 9 highlighted the need for clearer public notification and stakeholder consultation for land-use changes adjacent to sports complexes. Kenneth Crawford publicly asked, "Should you be or are you aware that the City sent out a request for a Conditional Use Permit application to landowners surrounding the sports complex for placement of shipping containers at 2803 Hwy 9?"

**Community Desire for Change and Mobilization Challenges:** While there's a broad desire for change among parents and the community regarding youth sports governance, there's a challenge in mobilizing them. Dana Miller relayed her "niece's feedback that many want change but don't know how to engage," indicating a nascent but promising potential for reform.

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### **Key Recommendations from the Case Study**

#### **The case study provides actionable recommendations to address the identified issues:**

**Standardize Proposal Documentation:** Require detailed financial breakdowns and usage plans for all proposals, published publicly at least 7 days prior to council discussion.

**Enhanced Communication Channels:** Implement a formal advisory log for council members to document pre-meeting advisements.

**Land-Use Transparency:** Establish clear public notification protocols for Conditional Use Permits, including mailed notices and online postings.

**Financial Reporting:** Adopt monthly financial disclosures for youth sports operations.

**Stakeholder Workshops:** Host quarterly community workshops led by subject-matter experts.

### **Conclusion**

The Seminole case study serves as a critical example of the challenges municipalities face in maintaining transparency, ensuring legal compliance, and fostering community trust in youth sports governance. The "proactive, data-driven exchanges between civic stakeholders and elected officials" are presented as a model for enhancing accountability. The lessons learned, particularly concerning financial transparency and structured land-use processes, offer a valuable "blueprint for other municipalities grappling with similar challenges."

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