

REVOLT

REVOLT INSIGHTS — PUBLIC RECORDS EXPLAINER

What the Public Records Show

The Rebecca Medina Matter — City of Deerfield Beach

Based on public records obtained via Florida Statute § 119

This explainer is based entirely on documents produced by the City of Deerfield Beach in response to a public records request. All quoted language is drawn directly from the records. Where the commissioner's response is referenced, it reflects his own written rebuttal submitted to the city attorney.

THE OCTOBER 17, 2025 INCIDENT

According to the records, at 6:57 AM on Friday, October 17, 2025, Commissioner Daniel Shanetzky — who represents District 3 on the Deerfield Beach City Commission — called Public Affairs Director Rebecca Medina Stewart twice. When she did not answer, he began texting her.

The subject of his messages: a photograph published in the New Pelican newspaper's October 15 coverage of a time capsule burial ceremony at the Braitwaite Senior Center. Shanetzky wanted to know why he was not pictured in the photo the newspaper chose to run.

In her complaint to HR, Medina explained that she told the commissioner his question was “misinformed and off base,” because the city has no editorial control over what the New Pelican publishes. She stated that she was not even present at the ceremony — she had been setting up the city's Fall Festival.

According to Medina's account, the commissioner continued to press his complaint and told her that her office should advocate for commissioners with the press. When she informed him that she intended to report the exchange, she stated that he warned he would raise the matter publicly.

Medina wrote to the commissioner:

“Respectfully, please stop texting me, and leave me alone.”

A FORMAL HR COMPLAINT

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Later that day, Medina sent two communications documenting the incident. She emailed HR Director Jacqueline Lindsay and copied Deputy City Attorney Karen Belle-Pierre, attaching 14 screenshots of text message exchanges with the commissioner. She also emailed City Manager Rodney Brimlow, copying City Attorney Anthony Soroka.

In her email to Brimlow, Medina described the commissioner's behavior as that of a bully and stated that he had harassed her through hostile and threatening messages over text and email.

She also noted that the October 17 exchange was not the first such incident:

"Mr. Shanetzky was asked several months ago to refrain from reaching out to me after a similar incident."

Medina further stated that at least two individuals in the community had told her that the commissioner was disparaging her publicly, claiming she was "after him and angry at him." She characterized this as harmful to her professional reputation after 13 years of service to the city.

In unusually direct language for an internal complaint, Medina wrote:

"He is a volatile bully who has harassed me."

She concluded by requesting that the matter be addressed and that neither she nor her staff be required to interact with the commissioner going forward.

A PATTERN IN THE RECORDS

The Medina complaint did not exist in isolation. The same records production includes multiple emails from City Manager Brimlow to Commissioner Shanetzky addressing procedural issues over the preceding months.

In May 2025, Brimlow wrote to the commissioner directing him to route all directives and orders to staff through the city manager's office, rather than contacting department directors directly.

In June 2025, Brimlow reminded the commissioner to stop emailing other elected officials about city matters and to use his city email address instead of his personal account for public records purposes.

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In September 2025, the city attorney wrote directly to Shanetzky cautioning him to be mindful of the Sunshine Law after the commissioner sent a meeting request to the full commission.

Also in September 2025, Brimlow sent Shanetzky a detailed email explaining that when the commissioner contacts outside agencies such as Broward County directly, it creates workflow problems and confusion, and asked him to route those requests through the city manager's office.

In October 2025, during a code compliance email thread involving a constituent, Brimlow again reminded the commissioner and staff about the risks of reply-all emails when multiple elected officials were in the chain.

In each of these instances documented in the records, the commissioner acknowledged the correction.

THE TEXT MESSAGE RECORD

Medina's HR filing included 14 screenshots of text messages between her and the commissioner, spanning from April 2025 through October 17, 2025.

The earlier messages show a working relationship. Medina assisted the commissioner with newsletter submissions, offered feedback on his commission meeting remarks, and provided guidance on proper procedures. Shanetzky expressed appreciation for her help on multiple occasions.

The tone shifted in late August 2025 after a dispute over a Century Village East Reporter article. Shanetzky accused Medina of failing to submit his column on time and suggested she had done so intentionally as retaliation because he did not read a statement she had drafted for him.

Medina responded that the accusation was unfounded, that she had been handling multiple priorities including PR for a BSO-related matter, and that she had been ill. She told him she had never received such a message from a sitting commissioner.

The exchange continued to escalate through September and October, culminating in the October 17 incident that prompted the formal HR complaint.

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THE COMMISSIONER'S RESPONSE

On December 22, 2025, Commissioner Shanetzky submitted a written rebuttal to City Attorney Anthony Soroka.

In his response, Shanetzky disputed Medina's characterization of his behavior. He stated that their relationship had been cordial during the first five months of his tenure and that it deteriorated after a disagreement over the BSO contract situation in the summer of 2025.

Shanetzky described an incident before his visit to BSO headquarters in which he stated Medina spoke to him in an aggressive and threatening manner, advising him not to attend the meeting. He said he told her the decision was his to make, and that she subsequently became hostile.

He further stated that after he chose not to read a statement Medina had drafted for a commission meeting, instead writing his own, she called his statement incomprehensible and said she would not assist him in the future.

Regarding the newspaper photo dispute, Shanetzky wrote that he contacted Medina because photos from a city event came from her office and he believed she had the ability to ensure he was represented. He stated he believed he was being purposely excluded.

The commissioner concluded his rebuttal by stating that he always tried to be professional and reasonable, that Medina's tone was hostile and threatening toward him, and that he had not bullied or harassed her.

WHAT THE RECORDS DO — AND DO NOT — SHOW

The records confirm that:

- A senior staff member formally documented harassment concerns involving a sitting commissioner and escalated them to HR, the city manager, and the city attorney.
- The staff member referenced at least one prior similar incident and stated that the commissioner had been previously asked to stop contacting her.
- Multiple city officials — including the city manager and city attorney — sent the commissioner written corrections on procedural matters over a period of several months.
- The commissioner submitted a written rebuttal disputing the staff member's account and offering his own version of events.

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The records do not show:

- Any formal disciplinary action taken against the commissioner. This is not unusual in municipal government. Elected officials are not employees of the city, and cities typically have limited mechanisms to discipline commissioners.

WHY THESE RECORDS MATTER

Public records like these document how city government functions behind the scenes. They show when senior staff feel compelled to formally document interactions with elected officials, and they provide a contemporaneous record of events that might otherwise remain private.

In this case, the records show more than a single complaint. They show a documented pattern: a new commissioner who was repeatedly instructed on proper procedures by the city manager, the city attorney, and department staff — and a senior official who eventually felt compelled to file a formal HR complaint after months of escalating interactions.

Both the complaint and the commissioner's rebuttal are now part of the public record.