

# City seeks dialogue with citizens

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

In a sit-down with *The Nugget* last week, City Manager Cory Misley shared his ideas about the role of local government and the challenges and opportunities inherent in running a small city.

“The beauty of living in a small town, as it relates to government, is you can meet with us regularly, have conversations, attend public meetings,” Misley said. “Pick up the phone, come into City Hall if something is important to you. We can have conversations about how to improve things.”

Misley realizes there are local factors that perhaps influence the current trust level, including history at the City in the past and a population that has tripled. Misley is intent on rebuilding citizen trust by being transparent in the City’s functioning and processes, seeking public input, and having open dialog.

“People can have my cell phone number. I’ll have those tough conversations,” offered Misley. “I am open to people’s ideas.”

However, he noted, having those tough conversations doesn’t imply a certain outcome.

“After talking with me, I can’t guarantee they will like what I have to say,” Misley said.

One of the major challenges of running a city government is maintaining a balance of all the key factors, including city revenue and expenditures, staffing,

unfunded liabilities like PERS, legislative challenges, the current legal landscape, and interactions with other governmental agencies (County, State, ODOT, U.S. Forest Service, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and other councils and commissions).

Another challenge Misley identified is the broader climate of mistrust of the government on a national level, which spills over at the local level. He thinks there seems to be a tendency by some to jump to conclusions without having the necessary information.

“Why doesn’t the City just ....” is easy to say, but in most situations, it’s not as simple as it seems.

It is one thing to have mistrust with Salem or Washington D.C. because access is challenging. Misley believes, “It is a civic privilege to be able to participate in your local government.”

Misley wants to assure the citizens that City staff are doing their best. Staff members are paid to be experts in their respective fields — land use, public works, finance, administration — or knowing who to bring in if more help is needed. Their job is to take care of the day-to-day operations and to make recommendations to the various advisory boards, committees, the Planning Commission, and City Council.

Public hearings and written comment allow for the citizens to offer their support, suggestions, or air their grievances. The final decision rests with the elected members of the Sisters City Council, who

are all volunteers.

“We are trying to do things right the first time. If that means we take the time for public outreach, study, public hearings, revisions, then we will do that,” Misley said.

“Pick up the phone, come into City Hall if something is important to you. We can have conversations about how to improve things.”  
— Cory Misley

He hopes the public will trust the City to do the right thing.

“I struggle with the balance of giving too much information too soon, when it might later change, and not enough to keep people adequately informed before decisions are made. It boils down to trust,” he concluded.

# Steel drum band to celebrate at park

A middle school steel drum group will play a free show Friday, June 21, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Fir Street Park as an end-of-school celebration.

OK\*2\*Botay, which means “okay to dance,” is a steel drum band for youth between grades six and 12 from Tri-Cities, Washington.

They are a remarkable group of young performers directed by Ben Leggett, who arranges and writes their

music. Members are selected in an annual audition process, primarily from students who have taken classes with the Tri-Cities Steel Band Association (<http://tcsba.org>).

OK\*2\*Botay practices weekly and performs many times throughout the year. The band performs throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Participants can expect delightful, energetic music that will make them want to join in and dance.



PHOTO PROVIDED

OK\*2\*Botay brings the fun to Fir Street Park on Friday at 5:30 p.m.

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