

So, you (think) you want to join the Jefferson Westside Neighbors Executive Board?

First, thanks for considering serving your neighborhood, it is a big deal. Potential Executive Board members need to be elected at a General Meeting and voted on by members (JWN residents, business owners, or business/non-profit managers) either in a special election or every April. Terms are for one year.

Candidates must declare their intent to run to jwneugene@gmail.com 30 days prior to the April election (second Tuesday) and then submit a brief bio for the voters' guide approximately 20 days prior to the election.

Eugene is divided up into different neighborhoods and Neighborhood Associations (NAs) are official bodies chartered by the city and operate according to a set of [bylaws](#) and their [charter](#). We have a small budget that is mostly dedicated for outreach activities. NAs host any required public meets on land use within our borders. The city is required to consult with a respective NA on any land use or development within their borders. We also host city representatives, nonprofits, and political candidates who wish to reach out to residents. The board acts on behalf of residents who have issues or questions with the city. We take positions on important issues as authorized by our members via votes or within the purview of the NA as authorized by our bylaws and charter. Basically, we act as an interface between the city and residents on matters related to land use and any other issues within our borders. These include advocating for improving parks, transportation infrastructure, public safety, and supporting neighborhood businesses.

Climate: We consider ourselves a “working board,” which means we like to get things done and believe that deliberation should lead to action. Time and emotional/intellectual bandwidth are scarce resources so we want to make sure we use these to the greatest possible effect. The JWN is considered a leader among NAs and is known for our effectiveness and innovative strategies to meet community needs and desires. As a board, we value collegiality and respectful discussion. We prefer to keep it mellow and friendly and avoid drama. Toward that end, while we do vote on issues, we generally get there via consensus. There are disagreements at times, but we always strive to keep it professional and not personal.

Time Commitment: Contrary to popular belief, most board members have full time jobs or are business owners. At the most basic level, board members need to prepare for and attend the monthly Board meeting (online), the monthly JWN General Meetings (second Tuesday of the month from 6:30-9pm, Jan-May, and Sept-Nov @ the Lane County History Museum @ Lane Events Center), keep up with discussions on the board listserv (traffic is overall low, but heavy at times depending on issues or events), and attend our events (like the annual picnic). There are also committees and certain tasks that board members can take on depending on interest and time. These include governance related duties such as treasurer and secretary or other duties like heading or participation in a committee or working on a project. Realistically, the baseline is three to seven hours a month (depending on if there is a general meeting). The JWN is sensitive to board members time constraints and simply expects everyone to do what they can. This means working a lot sometimes and not doing much at others. Just keep the Chair informed where you are at with your commitments.

Duties: Depends on what you are interested in. If you have a desire to tackle a problem or issues feel free to take the lead and make it happen.

Elected board positions are:

- Chair: facilitates meetings, sets the agenda, speaks on behalf of the board and JWN
- Vice Chair: assists the Chair in all matters, serves in his/her absence

Other appointed positions:

- Treasurer: handles the budget and JWN bank account
- Secretary: takes and produces minutes for the board and general meetings
- Neighborhood Leaders Council Representative: The NLC meets the final Tuesday of each month and is the coordinating body for all Eugene Neighborhood Associations. This is often the Chair or Vice Chair, but can be any board member.

Committees and Teams operate based on volunteer interest and commitment. Not all these teams are active. Committees Include:

- Events: handles the JWN picnic and EUG parade plus any other special events.
- Outreach: coordinate all outreach efforts such as the twice a year newsletter, postcards, yard signs, etc. Also, editors of the website, social media sites, and eNews.
- Land Use and Development: deals with planning and zoning as well as facilitating land use such as coordinating with the city and non-profits on affordable housing projects. Protects the JWN special area zones.
- Emergency Preparedness: informing residents and building resiliency in the face of potential natural or human caused disasters. A major effort is in preparing people for the “big one” - the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake.
- Climate Action Plan Team: tree preservation and planting as a hedge against climate change.

Advisory boards focus on involving the major sub-constituent groups in the JWN. We are currently looking for volunteers to reactivate these boards.

- Renter Advisory Board: Focus on involving renters and renter/landlord issues.
- Non-profit Advisory Board: Focus on homelessness - mostly JWN churches.
- Business Advisory Board: Coordinating with neighborhood businesses.

We also have special projects, such as applying for and managing neighborhood matching grants. We get a plan approved and recruit volunteers and then the city dedicates funds at a rate based on volunteer hours. We have had great success in this area with the creation of Wayside Park, Jefferson Dog Off-Leash Area, promoting street safety, creating the Charnel Mulligan Park Mural, surveying neighborhood trees, and funding outreach for the Historic District Task Force.

This all sound more grandiose than it really is, but it really is small “d” democracy in action. Board members also act as ambassadors to the neighborhood and seek to get residents involved in building a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community.