

Committee: **London Public Library Board**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Jason Dickson**

Occupation: **Bookseller, Author**

Work experience: **I have 20+ years experience as a bookseller in London, Ontario and Muskoka. I am also a published author (both trade books and freelance magazine work). I've also served on the Board of Directors of the Forest City Gallery and have adjudicated grants for the Ontario Arts Council and the London Arts Council. I recently curated a retrospective exhibition of London, Ontario LGBTQ artist Michael Bidner at the McIntosh Gallery.**

Education: **I am a graduate of the Humber School for Writers and The Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminar at Colorado College. I am also a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of Canada.**

Skills: **I would be able to approach the Board as both a small business owner and as a person with experience in the culture sector as both a professional artist and volunteer. My work running my own small bookshop has taught me a great deal about practical problem solving, community growth, and sustainability within the cultural business sector. My work in the literary community (my wife and I won a Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for our book the London 150) has taught me a great deal about making literacy projects and cultural institutions accessible and sustainable. These skills, obviously, are very transferable from one vocation to the other. Also as a person with a hidden disability (I am blind in one eye) I bring strong accessibility sensitivities and values to everything that I do.**

Interest reason: **The London Public Library has been a central part of my life since moving to London as a teenager. I can't imagine my life without it. I've no doubt there are a great number of people who feel the same. I believe in the library and would like to be a part of sustaining it and helping it grow.**

Contributions: **I feel that a unique perspective of small, grass-roots business-mindedness, community-based arts work, and accessibility values could be of service, if that is what is needed by the Board at this time.**

Past contributions: **As Vice-Chair, and eventual Chair, of the Forest City Gallery, I helped steward the gallery during a complicated move from its old location on Talbot Street to its current location on Richmond. This involved a great deal of negotiating and balance, as we had an active membership to persuade and private partners to please. Fortunately a fantastic Chair was in place and our team was wonderful (a great Board makes the job so much easier as I'm sure you know) and the move was a success. That would be the most complicated year of Board work in memory for me.**

Interpersonal: **I had the fortune to spend a year and a half as a member of 121 Studios working alongside Titus Ferguson and Savannah Sewell. Our bookshop was a member (we were set up as an anchor tenant) and we worked on a number of projects with the 121 team. One of these was a ridiculous and wonderful event called Kangaroo Variety (a live magazine) where a good number of folks from the community (entrepreneurs, artists, professionals) shared their stories and talents in front of a live audience. It needn't be said that many voices were at the table (we had a dynamic group running the event -- smart, creative, passionate people) as it should have been, as we wanted it. For me it was a model of how to effectively make something happen that was relevant, sustainable, and inclusive, without a single voice taking over. I look back and learn from that experience regularly.**

Interview interest: **Yes**