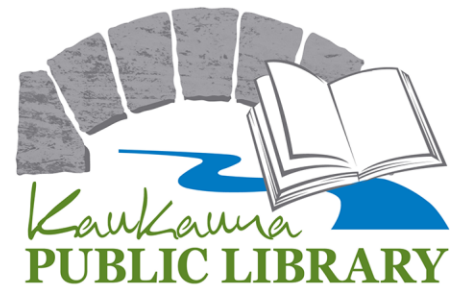


To: Kaukauna Public Library Board of Trustees
From: Library Director Ashley Thiem-Menning
Date: 10/17/25
Re: OWLS Updates



At a recent AAC meeting, there was a light discussion on the recommendation of migrating our software from CARLX to Polaris. The discussion quickly moved into most members asking if we could vote to migrate during that meeting. But the vote had already been scheduled for 11/21 at a special AAC meeting. I anticipate a yes vote, as this software is far superior to what we are currently using and comes with some great add-on's including a event software and the API for OverDrive content. If the yes vote goes through, we will need to migrate prior to August 2026 to save money. The Polaris software also had the best option for mobile app, and their discovery layer (catalog) is far better than what we are currently using. Overall, we are very pleased with the recommendation to move to Polaris and Vega.

We were also given information right before the 11/14 AAC meeting regarding Libby expenditures. OWLS is requesting that we explore the possibility of phasing in a match between our state-required amount and OWLS advantage account spending. While I do agree that there is inequity across the OWLS libraries in how much is being put into the advantage account, I am leery of taking another \$5,000 out of the budget for this. My opinion was that the memo released was leading against Hoopla. Further, all the panels and discussions we have had, even with WPLC directly, was that no matter how much money we dump into Libby, we aren't going to be able to fix the long waits.

While Hoopla does cost us over a dollar more per circ than Libby, the fact that it is an instant download cannot be ignored. Patrons love Hoopla and when the Hoopla budget gets tight, we hear about it. My concern is that we put \$10,000 into Libby and we still aren't touching the long waiting times. I am trying to have an open mind about it, but when we ask for data regarding the effect of the advantage titles for OWLS cardholder wait times, we are told that there isn't any way to really get it with how Libby is set up. Again, I can't argue that advantage spending is equitable, because it is not. OWLS and Appleton put a lot more into that account than we do. We have been working on increasing those expenditures, as we increase the materials line, but I am still uncertain how I feel about forcing libraries, specifically the small rural libraries, to match their state allocations. As I learn more about this, I will report back.