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Mark Belling writes column on West Bend Library Board

Well said.

"I've dealt with a lot of arrogant government officials in my career (former Illinois Gov. Jim Thompson and former Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist top the list) and a lot of sanctimonious ones (Russ Feingold and former Milwaukee County Supervisor Dan Diliberti). I've certainly met some hypocritical ones (Dane County District Attorney Brian Blanchard) and some abusive spenders and money wasters (almost any school board comes to mind). I've had my run-ins with officials who behave like tinhorn dictators (former Menomonee Falls Village President Joe Greco). But until the last couple of months, I'm not sure I've ever encountered a pack of public officials as bad as the West Bend Library Board. With the state Legislature passing the worst public policy document in Wisconsin history, the Iranian mullahs slaughtering pro-democracy demonstrators and the president trying to socialize government health care and even with Brett Favre unretiring for the 84th time, there are other things I should be writing about. But this board in West Bend is so amazingly over the top that it is screaming for exposure.

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They won't move the porn and won't let anybody tell them they have to. But that didn't stop a bunch of concerned West Bend citizens. Doing exactly what those in a free society have every right to do, they pressured the board and city council to reverse the decision. This is what America is supposed to be all about – citizens petitioning their government to respect the public will.

For this they have been abused by the library board and its supporters. But last week, the board, led by local leftie Barbara Deters, went to an extreme that is beyond belief. Appalled they were told by the city attorney they had to comply with state law and share e-mails about the library issue, the board voted to hire an outside attorney in attempt to keep their e-mails secret! It is basic Wisconsin law that all correspondence and documents of any public employee, including e-mails, are public records. The astonishingly arrogant library board in West Bend doesn't think that law includes them. So, it's ignoring the city attorney and hiring a lawyer using ENDOWMENT funds! Money that has been donated over the years to purchase quality materials for the West Bend Library is being looted by board members who want to keep breaking the law. They'll be paying \$250 an hour.

Ponder this: The West Bend Library Board believes children have a right to see gay pornography but the public doesn't have a right to see public records.

I'll repeat that: The West Bend Library Board believes children have a right to see gay pornography but the public doesn't have a right to see public records."