

**REPORT 16
26 MAY 2021**

**EXTRACT OF DRAFT STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION,
WATER AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
MINUTES 16
17 MAY 2021**

**EXTRAIT DE L'ÉBAUCHE DU
PROCÈS-VERBAL 16 DU COMITÉ
PERMANENT DE LA PROTECTION
DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT, DE L'EAU
ET DE LA GESTION DES DÉCHETS
LE 17 MAI 2021**

SERVICE LINE WARRANTIES OF CANADA (SLWC) PROGRAM

ACS2021-OCC-ENV-0003

CITY WIDE

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste Management recommend that City Council:

- 1. Direct staff to prepare a communication that can be shared by Councillors (e.g., via website, newsletter, mail-out, etc.) with residents, which clearly outlines the SLWC program, highlights the various options residents may have available with respect to protection for private water and sewer services, and clarifies the parameters and implications of the City's arrangement with SLWC;**
- 2. Direct staff to provide Members of Council with a review and comment period of no less than 10 business days for any future program communications from SLWC related to the Service Warranty Program; and**
- 3. Direct staff to undertake a review of the Service Line Warranties of Canada (SLWC) program launch and report back to Council on their findings and suggestions, which would include lessons learned related to:**
 - a) City of Ottawa logo use;**
 - b) Clarification on mail sent to addresses where the warranty**

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program is not an option (i.e., multi-property);

- c) Confusion regarding messaging in the letter where residents may perceive undue obligation;**
- d) An overview of options available to residents should Council not wish to partner with a private service warranty company to mitigate the risk of private water/sewer service failures, and;**
- e) Evaluating strategies for briefing and engaging Members of Council in advance.**

Vice-Chair Menard spoke to explain the events that had brought about the need for the above Motion, stemming from confusion around the program because of a lack of information and communication prior to the initial mail-out to residents by the third-party service provider. He noted the slight change in the Motion from the time of its original submission on 30 March, to point out the addition of clause 3d) above, and explained that the Motion would serve to ensure that such communications errors would not be repeated in future.

Mr. Kevin Wylie, General Manager, PWES, and Ms Meagan Wheeler-Cuddihy, Program Manager, Capital Planning and Strategic Asset Management, Asset Management Branch, Infrastructure Services, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development (PIED) Department, were present to respond to questions.

Mr. Wylie said that as General Manager, he took responsibility for the communications oversight, and would work with the Public Information and Media Relations Branch to review similar strategies in future to ensure that any such issues would be captured earlier on in the process.

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Members were receptive to the above proposals, to include an improved communications strategy, and expressed appreciation for opportunities to receive technical briefings in advance of similar program roll-outs in future. Members also asked for more information on how the City makes decisions on partnering with private entities and how the City's name and logo are used in related communications.

Discussions having concluded, the report recommendations were put before the Committee and were "CARRIED", as presented, along with the following Direction to Staff, submitted by Councillor King:

DIRECTION TO STAFF

In response to Inquiry N^o EPWWM 01-21, the City of Ottawa's Corporate Technical Briefing Guidelines suggest that technical briefings should be offered to update Council about major legislative initiatives, projects, and significant newsworthy developments. At the time of the program launch, staff were not of the opinion that the partnership program with SLWC satisfied any of the referenced criteria. Would staff take Direction to have an addendum to those Guideline criteria that would ensure compulsory technical briefings are held concerning the rollout of City-wide programs targeted to residents provided by third parties?