KBAD Questionnaire: Mario Reyes Answers

General background

Name: Mario Reyes

Office sought: Kyle City Council, District 3 (special election, December 12, 2026)

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Questions 1 to 8

1. Background

I'm a lifelong Texan. I grew up in Corpus Christi, graduated from Ray High School, and earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Dallas Baptist University. My wife Kelly and I moved to Kyle in 2007 and raised our three sons here.

I spent 16 years as a federal contracting officer with the General Services Administration (GSA). I held an unlimited warrant, the highest level of federal contracting authority, and could award contracts without a dollar limit. I administered 70 contracts each year. Before my federal career, I owned a franchise in Fort Worth and managed restaurants in Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas. Since 2015, our family has operated a small business in Buda and Kyle.

In 2017, while working for GSA, I volunteered for a seven-week deployment with the U.S. Small Business Administration's Surge Force, helping families assess damage and begin rebuilding after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. I received a Response and Relief award. This is my first run for public office.

2. Kyle in 2030

The road projects voters approved in 2022 are finished, including the Vybe Trail. Residents can track project schedules and budgets online. When contractors fell behind, the city enforced the contract terms.

The General Fund reserve is above the required 25%. A separate Strategic Capital Reserve fund is growing, with a public balance and a three-fourths council vote required for loans. Water

projects are on schedule, and customers can see how their rates were set in a published cost-of-service study.

Eligible homeowners 65 and older have a freeze on the city portion of their property taxes and a restored, higher senior exemption, helping them afford to stay in their homes.

Kyle still feels like a hometown. Neighbors know each other by name, families line the streets for parades, and downtown is still a place where you run into someone you know.

3. Budgeting mindset

In FY 2024–25, the city budgeted about $14 million in development revenue and collected around $7 million. I'd base the budget on realistic revenue estimates and check them against actual collections each quarter.

I'd protect the city's emergency savings and require a plan to replenish any reserves we use.

Before approving a major contract, I'll ask whether we got a fair price, whether the contractor can meet the schedule, and what the city can do if costs rise or work falls behind.

When Kyle builds roads or expands water lines ahead of growth, I'll ask what the city must pay upfront, how much we can realistically recover through impact fees and other lawful tools, and what costs would still fall on existing taxpayers and utility customers.

The interim city manager and council made hard choices this year, cutting the General Fund about 10% and lowering the tax rate 8.34%. I'd build on that work by tracking spending and showing residents where the budget needs adjustment. I'd look for savings before asking homeowners to pay more.

4. ICE cooperation

I'll follow state and federal law. Texas Senate Bill 4 (2017) bars cities from adopting policies that prohibit or materially limit immigration enforcement, requires local agencies to honor federal immigration detainer requests when legally required, and provides for removal from office in certain cases.

Where Kyle has discretion, I'd keep police focused on local crime, traffic, and emergencies. State law generally limits questions about crime victims' and witnesses' immigration status. Residents should feel safe calling 911 or reporting a crime. I'd support a clear written policy, explain those protections in English and Spanish, and have council discuss and decide any voluntary federal agreement in public.

5. Flock cameras

I support law enforcement and believe residents deserve a say in how public surveillance is used. In October, council voted 4–3 to suspend Kyle's Flock cameras until voters weigh in through a nonbinding referendum in May. I'll respect the result.

I'd review the contracts, which cost about $426,000 a year, the results police can document, and how the data is protected. If Kyle resumes using the cameras, I'd require limited retention, a log of every search, strict rules for outside access, and a public annual report.

6. Services for underserved areas

I'd publish neighborhood-level spending on streets, sidewalks, drainage, and parks, along with police, fire, and emergency medical response times. I'd prioritize reliable coverage in underserved areas, including East Kyle. I'd work with the agencies that serve those neighborhoods to identify gaps, assess whether staffing or station locations could improve response times, and report progress publicly.

Seniors on fixed incomes need a freeze on the city portion of their property taxes and a stronger senior homestead exemption. I'd make sure eligible households know about Kyle's Utility Customer Assistance Program and can apply. If utility rates must rise, I'd look for ways to phase in increases.

Customers outside city limits who pay Kyle water rates but can't vote in city elections deserve rates tied to documented costs. I'd provide city notices and information in English and Spanish as standard practice and hold neighborhood meetings at times working families can attend.

7. Forensic audits

Yes, with a defined scope, a firm budget, and public results. Annual audits assess whether financial statements are fairly presented. Forensic audits can examine specific concerns, including property purchases, credit card use, and contract awards, which are among the five areas council selected.

For example, the audited FY 2024–25 report shows a $17.18 million ending General Fund balance, while the city's budget presentation used $14.98 million. Staff deferred that $2.2 million difference to the forensic audit. Residents deserve an explanation.

I'd insist on a competitively selected independent firm and public findings. The audit should follow the evidence without prejudging anyone, and the city should use the findings to strengthen its controls.

8. Pride celebration

Every Kyle resident should feel welcome and be treated equally. In July, council directed staff to work with nonprofits and community groups on options and costs for a 2027 Pride event.

I support a community-led Pride celebration, with city support for permits, venues, and public safety under the same rules as other events. I’d review the cost of any city-run event, including Pride and Hispanic Heritage celebrations, and favor sponsorships and partnerships to cover costs.

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