The meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) was called to order by William Neilson at 9:05 a.m.

Members of the AAB introduced themselves, as did the other meeting attendees.

Meeting Minutes The previous meeting minutes were approved. Mr. Moore made the motion to approve and it was seconded by Mr. Nissley.

Legislative Update – Representative Causer will remain Chairman of house agriculture committee. Senator Vogel will remain Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Senator Schwank will be Minority Chair.
Update on Standard Animal Weights under Chapter 83. The consensus of the group was each organization, if interested, can submit their own comments on the animal weights to the State Conservation Commission.

Growing Greener and Federal Section 319 Projects and Funding - Doug Goodlander gave an overview of the two programs and what the funds are used for. Mr. Goodlander also described the application process.

Drones and Crop Management in Agriculture – J. Craig Williams from PSU Extension described the potential uses of drones in agriculture and the FAA Regulatory structure for various types of drones and how they are used.

PA Farm Practices Survey – Matt Royer gave the group a summary of a survey that was sent to farmers in the Bay watershed. The survey was an attempt to capture non-cost shared BMP’s or BMP’s that farmers are voluntarily using. PSU has expertise in survey design and data collection. The survey mailing resulted in a 33% response rate which is considered good. Some members of the group are concerned that EPA may require additional requirements in the CAFO Permit. The CAFO General Permit is up for renewal soon. The industry feels that it can demonstrate that many acres are under nutrient management planning.

PA Agriculture in the Balance Conference Update – Matt Royer reported on the 3-day conference. The conference participants developed four priorities for the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay; 1) Increase technical capacity, including training. 2) Promote culture of stewardship. Protect streams and soil health; 3) Develop standards of excellence that go above baseline compliance; and 4) Focus on priority watersheds.

Board/Public Comments/Concerns –
There being no additional discussions, the meeting was adjourned:

The next meeting is set for Thursday, February 23, 2016 at 9 AM, in the DEP Laboratory.